Constance B. Willard's Great Serial, "QUEEN OF THE LOVE-RED ROSE," NEXT WEEK

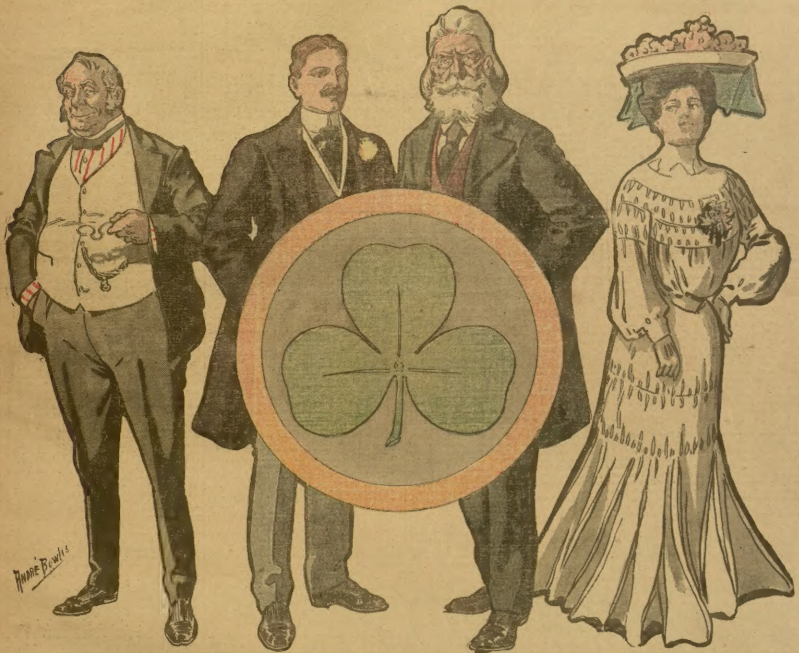
THE CHICAGO LEDGER

VOL. XXXII, NO. 33. CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 1904. SINGLE COPIES 5 CENTS.

A MAN OF MYSTERY;

Or, Who Was Betrayed?

By Colonel Prentiss Ingraham.



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Begun in No. 32, Aug. 6. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VI.
AILEEN, ALANNA!

The errand upon which Larkin Lawless had visited Ireland the previous year was one ostensibly in the interests of moderation. There, as in New York, it suited Lark to be known as a moderate man. He knew his fellow men better than most, and while he kept in the good graces of both the extreme wings of his party, he well knew that it was absurd to think of taking every balloon and gasometer among them seriously.

It was thus that he talked when among the Parnellites on the other side.

"Some of our hot-headed brethren," he would say, "have adopted, as they have here, peculiar schemes, and such as can never meet the acceptance of the real friends of home rule. What's more, our American supporters have no sympathy with such methods.

"It is this, however, that hurts us with our sympathizers in England. They fear, and with some show of reason, to trust such men with self-government.

"What they fail to see is, that an Irish Parliament would exist under constitutional limits, and would of course be elected in a constitutional way. With that, Ireland must and would be contented."

Such sentiments were becoming in a man of the polish and culture of Larkin Lawless, and made him to be looked upon not only as exponent of the real views of the home rulers, but to command the respect of thinking men who still looked upon them as slightly revolutionary.

Up to that time, Lawless had been without "an itching palm" for the vulgar rewards of his services. He knew that funds were constantly being misappropriated, and that such would probably continue to be the case; but he cared not to share in the contemptible plunder. His time, he had persuaded himself, would come later.

He had even begun to dream that he might live in history as the first Premier of an enfranchised land, and he was sincere for the time; for Larkin Larwless was a young man, and youth is seldom wholly mercenary.

Later on, we shall see how materially his views and practices were changed.

It is not to be supposed, with the many attractions of person and manner possessed by the young ambassador, that he failed to make conquests among the fair sex; and it is of one of these that we are now to speak.

Among those, and they were many, by whom Larkin Lawless was kindly and hospitably received while in the south of Ireland was a family in Cloumel, named Molyneux. They were of a good old stock, as is said in those parts, though now much impoverished, and in numbers greatly reduced. Indeed, at the time of his visit, the only living representatives of the house were a Mrs. O'Halloran and her two nieces, Anne and Aileen Molyneux.

These last were respectively the oldest and the youngest of a once numerous household bard; Anne being thirty-five and Aileen but eighteen years old.

Practical and matter of fact, Anne Molyneux had gone through half a prolonged lifetime without an arrow from the quiver of the blind god having reached her. She had not been without attractions in her day, but a sense of duty to those who were nearest her had caused her to repel when any advances were made. Those dear ones, with the exception of Aileen, the pet lamb of the flock, were gone, and this single care remained to her.

Their Aunt Ursula was aged and infirm, and the faithful Anne felt that she soon must be all to Aileen, and Aileen was all in all to her.

And Aileen herself, a winsome, rather buxom maiden, innocent and confiding, dressed in the not unpicturesque fashion of the better class in the southwest of Ireland, was little short of charming. Plump as a partridge, the fact that she was rather beyond the medium height took away any semblance of a too healthful bloom, while her sensitive lips, liquid and alluring eyes of deepest azure, and a wealth of crispy light-brown hair falling over a broad, low forehead made a picture of youth and vivacity seldom excelled.

So thought Larkin Lawless, while the young girl, on her part, was fascinated.

The careful training which had been hers, the secluded life which had been led by her aunt and sister since parents and brothers had been taken from them, made the presence of such an attractive man as Larkin Lawless doubly dangerous.

And then, the mission upon which he had come; for Aileen had all the enthusiasm of an Irish lassie for the old land, its past, and its possible future. And who better than Lark Lawless could paint those glories with pleasing foreground and perspective?

Indeed, the whole family were charmed with their new acquaintance; though, even then, fearing for Aileen's peace of mind, they affected to disparage him. The time came, and that soon, when their "colleen" ceased to allude to him in any way; but at the first she was never weary of sounding his praises.

"What a handsome man Mr. Lawless is—don't you think so, auntie?"

"Maybe so, mavourneen," would be the cautious reply of Mrs. O'Halloran, "but in my time red hair was too common to be much thought of."

"He is not red haired, Aunt Ursula. Is he, Anne?"

"I don't know, dear. What do you call it?"

"Golden, of course."

"So it is, I believe—eighteen carrots."

Then Aileen would be silent.

Ere long, as has been said, she was entirely so on the subject of Larkin Lawless; and then it was that those whose one treasure she was became really anxious. More guarded than ever they became, and more solicitous for their idolized one; longing, more than ever, for the time to come when the ambassador would be summoned back to New York, for Lawless gave no sign of returning of his own volition.

That time at last came, and with it the final blow, to Aileen as well as to themselves. She, poor child, had not troubled herself to think of it; for, as may be imagined, Lark had not spoken of it to her until it was no longer possible to withhold the knowledge from her. When he did, the trusting girl, mere child that she was in worldly things, thought of nothing but accompanying him.

It would be hard, of course, to leave sister Anne, trying, indeed, to part with poor old Aunt Ursula, but with what maiden in love's young dream are these ever more than secondary considerations?

"It will be next week," he said to Aileen, when he had finally made up his mind that she must be told. "I had thought of running over to England before I returned, but you have all made it too pleasant for me here, and I haven't even taken the time to visit Dublin again as I had promised myself. So I must take the Cunarder at Cork."

Not a word, it will be seen, of Aileen's bearing him company. Not a syllable pointing to a return in the near future.

The girl was silent. To save her, she could not have questioned him further.

Lawless saw it and, scoundrel that he was, set about helping himself out of the scrape which he foresaw might yet be serious. After a pause he continued:

"It will be Tuesday, which gives me, luckily, some time for preparation. Confound those Yankee friends of mine! It's all business with them. However, I shall be able to get through with everything in time, and have Monday to ourselves in Cloumel."

"To ourselves!" How pleasant that was, and then—so thought Poor Aileen—they could arrange matters between them.

"And so Mr. Lawless is going back to America in a few days?" ventured Ursula, when Aileen, having taken leave of the man who had been so devoted for weeks, returned to the parlor. Anne Molyneux was present, but she was silent, though none the less anxious.

"Yes, he sails on Tuesday," replied Aileen.

"On Tuesday next?" asked her sister.

"Tuesday next," said the girl, lightly; "but he is coming here again on Monday."

But on Monday Larkin Lawless came not. What Aileen's feelings were when evening came without him, who can say? We can imagine somewhat the agony of the one who was to her sister and mother in one, when she witnessed the pallor of that face on which there had never before been even the shadow of a care. Yet she put no question to the suffering child. She was too merciful, too truly loving, for that.

What, indeed, could she have said?

But a greater misery was in store for the tortured woman. Tuesday morning dawned and Aileen was missing!

The first thought, as always in such cases, that came to Anne Molyneux, was the dreariest of all—suicide.

But, no—thank Heaven!—sad as it all was, the wrongs of poor Aileen, bitter though they had been, were not such as drive the betrayed "anywhere, out of the world."

She had been slighted, her heart, a true woman's purest and best affections won, and tossed aside; but that had been all. Even that Aileen had been slow to perceive. She would not accept the knowledge even now.

There must, she persuaded herself, be some explanation, and Larkin would yet make it. But when? It was Monday evening now, and he was to sail on the morrow. He could not return as he had said.

The next day saw Aileen Molyneux in Cork.

The Oregon was due at Queenstown, but she was so fortunate, knowing the address of Lawless in the city, as to meet him at his hotel. There the coward threw off the mask. What other course, indeed, unless to act like an honorable man, was left to him?

He had intended to return to Cloumel. He had felt, he said, that the easiest way for both, and the kindest to her, was that he take his leave unceremoniously.

Then came the old, old story—lies throughout—of a hand pledged across the water, where his heart could never be given, and of the blissful dream from which he had been compelled to awaken.

Young though she was, and inexperienced, Aileen Molyneux gave no credence to this.

Fond and loving, she was proud as well, and she felt above all things humiliated. And with this feeling was aroused one of which none who knew her, not even her faithful sister, would have believed her capable.

She shed no tears, neither in her false lover's presence nor when alone. She had become, as it were, another being.

"We shall meet again, Larkin Lawless!" she said; "and that when you least expect it. I was a child yesterday—I am one no longer."

That was all.

On the afternoon of that day, as Anne Molyneux told Larkin Lawless, Aileen was seen and recognized at Queenstown. From that point no one had been able to trace her. They might suspect, as Anne herself did, that she had fled with Lawless to America, but they were at fault there.

One thing was certain. Pretty Aileen Molyneux was never again seen in Cloumel.

CHAPTER VII.

WATCHING AND WAITING.

Lark Lawless had no thought, when he pushed Aileen Molyneux over the precipice, of ending with one blow her persecution of him. In fact, so unfamiliar was he with the neighborhood, that not until the hapless woman had uttered that wild cry as she fell from the bank, did he recognize the spot as the one that had been pointed out to him on a previous visit to Eastlake as "Lovers' Leap." He had heard, at that time, marvelous stories of its height, and of the impossibility that any one could survie a fall into its gloomy depths; so, when he had listened for a full minute and heard no further sound from his victim, he made sure that all was over.

The murderous deed was done in the excitement of the moment, when provoked by the language made use of by the desperate woman, and Lark had but few compunctions of conscience on the subject. Such as he had were more than dispelled by the reflection that, to say the least of it, a great annoyance, and a very possible bar to his success in life, had been removed from his path. And the wretched woman had brought it upon herself. She had madly courted her own fate.

With these thoughts, Lark Lawless found his way back in the twilight to his hotel, to politics and Polinski, cozening and Cora St. Orme.

Far across the sea, in Cloumel, poor old Ursula O'Halloran had gone to rest in the churchyard soon after the disappearance of her darling, and Anne Molyneux, having nothing now to detain her in the land of her forefathers, and one sole remaining object in life, set out by herself in search of Aileen.

Larkin Lawless, for some reason of his own, had represented to these unsuspecting women, that his home was in Boston; and thither the avenging sister, without delay, sought him. For Anne, whatever others might think—and most people, it is to be feared agreed with her—felt convinced that Aileen had accompanied Lawless to the New World. Why else, indeed, had she been in Queenstown, and in disguise at that?

But in Boston Miss Molyneux found all her search fruitless. All inquiries, she felt, must be made cautiously, and she was not long in discovering that Mr. Larkin Lawless could not be quite so prominent in patriotic circles as he had been so fond of representing himself. The most that any one seemed to know of him was his name; but, while it seemed tolerably certain that his home was not at the "Hub," there was no clue toward locating him in New York, or elsewhere.

At last, one was found who had seen Lawless the autumn previous, soon after his return from Ireland. He was then in Eastlake, a fashionable summer resort; and, as the season was over, it seemed probable that he was permanently settled there.

So Anne was led to believe, and though mistaken, she had been but a few days in the little town when Lark Lawless actually arrived upon the scene. Hardly had he done so when, as we know, she herself vanished, though not in the way in which the scheming adventurer believed she had done.

She had been able to learn nothing as to whether Lawless knew aught of the present whereabouts of Aileen, but her keen ears and adroit movements had put her in possession of two facts in regard to that worthy, and of these she was determined to take every advantage. The first was that, penniless adventurer as he now seemed to be, he was bent on winning the hand of the wealthy Miss St. Orme; the other, that, however true he might be to the League of which he was a trusted member, he was bent on using the credulous Polinski for his own purposes, to the extent perhaps of betraying him.

And Lark Lawless was not slow in beginning his efforts in the direction of Cora St. Orme. As may be surmised, he commenced proceedings by ingratiating himself with the young lady's guardian, and this was anything but a difficult task when that gentleman's weak points were understood and duly flattered. Few could manage this better than the oily and fascinating young Irishman.

Major Warder, in addition to having no small idea of his own importance socially and professionally, had for some time been under the impression that he, more than any other man in the United States, was fitted to adjust the very knotty question of the land troubles in the Green Isle. The Major was a man who was ever ready to jump at conclusions. He had few ideas enough, in all conscience, but the few he had held complete possession of him.

He rarely troubled himself with the philosophic why or wherefore of anything; but, all the same, he felt very profoundly, if very vaguely, about some things. And one of these was that Ireland's great want was a leader, and that, up to the present time, such an individual had not put in appearance.

Major Warder had no ambition for the post himself, though it would not have been difficult to persuade him that he filled the bill, but he was looking out for the coming man continually, and it was a pet ambition of his to be the discoverer of this second Moses.

Parnell, he was wont to declare, lacked the first elements required; and, as for his fellow patriots, they were men of whom, generally speaking, it was impossible to express one's opinion in polite society. All this, Lawless was able to read at a glance, and he humored it to the full. He began by expressing his conviction, delicately enough, but as if it had been forced from him, that Warder alone grasped the situation, and was the man to meet it. At the same time, he adroitly filled that good old egotist's mind with the idea till it seemed to burst upon his muddy intellect like an inspiration, that he, Lawless, combined in himself all the requisite qualities, and more.

Happy in his supposed discovery—and Lawless though modesty shrinking from the honors which the Major would fain thrust on him, quietly humored the absurd delusion—the old gentleman's first care was to give his niece and her lover the full benefit of the new light that had dawned upon him. Ralph Rohan had always been a favorite with Major Warder, and his suit with Cora had not lacked every encouragement from him.

"A capital fellow, this new friend of ours," he would say—for, by this time, Lark had contrived to become quite intimate with his fellow guests at the Hotel de L'Huys.

Ralph, as he had declared from the first, rather fancied the versatile young Irish-American, while Cora had her own reasons for desiring his acquaintance.

"A capital fellow!" he repeated. "He has quite inoculated me with some of his ideas. I am really beginning to feel quite an interest in home rule and the land question."

"Beginning?" thought Cora St. Orme, but she wisely said nothing.

"One can't very well help that," said the always adroit Ralph.

"No, indeed! And, fact is, I wouldn't if I could. As a race, the Celts always have interested me greatly."

"I must say, Uncle Will," put in Cora, with whom tact was never a strong point, "I can't agree with you. I can never, for the life of me, associate anything that is grand or inspiring with them—at least, with such of them as one sees over here. The servants, I am sure, are perfectly dreadful."

"I'm afraid then, Cora," said Ralph, who saw this did not suit her uncle's present vein, "none of our own nation's wards can hope to awaken much enthusiasm in you. Neither the Africans nor the aborigines are a very taking lot, you'll admit; that is, if we leave out of sight what Mrs. Stowe and Fennimore Cooper have to say about them."

"Well, they are not," said the young lady, decidedly.

"And yet there was a Toussaint L'Ouverture; an Uncas, and even a Pocahontas, if history doesn't falsify fearfully."

"Bravo, Rohan! You have her there," said the Major, greatly pleased. "You must own yourself conquered. Even the Poles, I take it, are not as a people the ones to inspire a great deal of sentiment, but we all admire Kosciusko and What's-his-name, and I'm sure you think this old Polinski cuts a romantic figure enough."

"Well," said Cora, "he does look as though he might represent something beside the spoils."

"To be sure he does. And poor old Ireland is not without such brave and self-sacrificing spirits either. She has her——"

"Rossa," supplied the young lady, seeing that her uncle paused.

"Nonsense! She certainly has been lacking, of late years, in men of precisely the right stamp; but the man is always found when the emergency arrives, and I begin to think—well, that I——"

"Have just been reading of him. Do tell us all about it, Uncle Will."

"Better than that, my girl!"

"Do you really mean to say you have seen the Celtic Cyrus?"

"Yes, Coralie, and conversed with him."

Ralph Rohan smiled. He knew pretty well what was coming.

"When and where, may I ask?" queried Cora St. Orme.

"This morning, and here."

"Angels and ministers of all the religious denominations defend us! Have we a Brian Boruhe among us? Who is the warrior bold?"

Major Warder was positively beaming.

"Can you not surmise?" he asked.

"Don't hurry me. Give me time, please. It cannot surely be Tim, the porter; though, physically, he cuts a formidable figure enough. Oh, I have it! It is this rollicking Mr. McDermott."

"Cora, I am surprised at you. I did really think you had more discernment, more knowledge of character. You don't take after me, that's certain. And you have met him, too, and conversed with him."

"Of course your uncle refers to Mr. Lawless," remarked young Rohan, who now deemed it time to say something, if only to keep in the Major's good graces. "He is rather an extraordinary man, in my opinion."

"Oh, yes, and in mine," said the girl.

As she made this admission, in a tone in which the sarcasm was barely perceptible, a man, who sat at the farther end of the balcony, apparently reading a newspaper, looked up suddenly, and the expression on his face was such that all three of our friends were struck by it. The next moment he had vanished within doors.

This stranger had been stopping at the hotel but a day or two, and had the air of a student, being apparently occupied exclusively with his own concerns. He was thin, sallow and beardless—evidently a foreigner.

"Do you know that man, Rohan?"

"I do not, Major, except that his name is Mondelet."

"A Frenchman, eh?"

"I fancy so."

"Yes," said Cora; "the servants say he speaks no English."

"Must have a lively time here, then," muttered Major Warder.

As she turned to go in, Cora St. Orme stooped and picked up the paper which Mondelet had seemingly been reading. It was the Courier des Etats Units. But there was something more.

In a fit of abstraction it would seem that the sol disant Frenchman had forgotten himself. Some words in English were scribbled on the margin. Cora remembered the look in his eyes.

"He will bear watching," she whispered to herself.

CHAPTER VIII.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

When Aileen Molyneux left her home and set out to seek Larkin Lawless in Cork, it was with the avowed determination never to return to it. She was not without the hope that her lover's failure to keep his appointment had been caused by no fault of his own, and that marriage would follow at once, on their meeting; in which case she would, of course, accompany him to the United States.

If disappointed in this, the poor girl had no plans. One thing only she was resolved upon, and that was, she would not remain to be pitied by her friends, and pointed at by her enemies.

Her appearance in Queenstown, and partially disguised, was with an object. She would have it believed that, whether with Larkin Lawless or not, she had sailed on the Oregon.

The steamer, however, left port without her, and Aileen, finding that another for Liverpool would touch at the Cove within twenty-four hours, made up her mind to remain there in hiding, and take passage direct for England. Should she go by rail by the way of Dublin, she would be certain to be seen by some one and recognized, even though no search in that direction might be made for her. But, as has been said, there was but one supposition in the minds of Anne Molyneux and poor old Ursula O'Halloran—a supposition that was shared by all their neighbors—and that was that Aileen had fled with Lark Lawless.

The desperate, half-crazed girl had no definite plans as to her future. All she knew was that she was bent on coming up again with the man who had so heartlessly cast her off, and that then she would never more lose sight of him. What little money she could command—and it was not much—she had brought with her, and this was supplemented by jewels which would, she knew, realize something more, and thus Aileen Molyneux set out alone to face the world.

Having reached Liverpool, her first step was to complete her disguise, and this, though not without some hesitancy, she soon decided upon.

Henceforth she would be known as belonging to the ruder sex.

When first the fugitive stood in her Liverpool lodgings, clothed in male attire, it would be saying little to assert that not one of her former friends would have known her. She scarcely recognized her own reflection in the mirror.

In a few short days Aileen had grown, in appearance, ten years older. A look of determination, hitherto foreign to her features, was now imprinted upon them. It was as though the spirit of some old ancestor, who had long centuries ago withstood the Danes, had by some subtle metempsychosis taken possession of her.

She smiled with a look of bitter triumph when this very thought occurred to her.

"A Molyneux scorned and slighted!" she hissed. "It never was before; or, if it was, it met with its reward, and shall now!"

But she felt that she must not linger there. She was going out into the world, how she knew not, nor in what way, but the world's great metropolis would be a good starting-point, and thither she would first go. The one thought of Aileen was that she was being led, and that the retribution she sought was certain.

In London, however, there seemed for a time little prospect that the opening she sought in the gloom of the future would manifest itself. That loneliness, never so intense and oppressing as when alone in a crowded city, was upon her, yet Aileen was far from being in despair.

She was not, strange to say, impatient.

She felt that she could bide her time.

At length, somehow, an uncontrollable impulse seemed to draw her for the time from the monotonous din and bustle of the great mart, and a railway ride of an hour or two brought her to Stansbury. She could not have told why she selected that quiet little town as the objective point of her day's outing. She, herself, would have explained it in the way which was for some time to become habitual to her:

"I was led!"

The day passed with her eventless, and when on inquiry she learned that there was a train for London about dark, she decided to return by it.

"No light yet," she whispered, "but it will come!"

"Yes, it will come," she repeated, as she walked leisurely, but with a firm and decided—anything but a feminine—tread, toward the station, as the twilight fell, and she looked up to the tranquil sky.

It still lacked some time before the train for which Aileen waited was due, but all at once a sound in the distance made her pause. She caught her breath suddenly with a strange sensation, which, however, had not in it the first elements of fear.

"Something is coming!" she said; yet without the slightest reference in her mind to the sound which now came nearer.

It was only a down train whistling for the tunnel.

Aileen had now emerged from the tree-bordered avenue that led from the inn to the station, and could look for some distance along the line. Where she paused was just above the opening of the tunnel which had been cut through a portion of the heath, and she perceived at that point a long platform and a temporary depot where it was intended that one should be built for the junction.

Slowly she walked down the awkward wooden steps which led down the lane to the platform; and then stood leaning against the rude hand-rail, feeling glad of the brief rest after the day spent in aimless wandering.

"There is no need to hurry," she said to herself; "my train is not yet due."

Thus she remained, gazing absently about her, yet with an air of inexpressible thoughtfulness. The only thing that she noticed was a middle-aged man in livery, standing near a pile of luggage, and who seemed to be waiting impatiently for some one.

Presently a guard came along, and Aileen heard him address the servant, who replied in good English, but with a marked foreign accent:

"Yes, he's coming, sir. I was driven on with all these traps, and my master was to drive after me. He's always on hand only at the last moment—it's his way."

"Your train's due now," said the guard.

"I know," was the reply; "but some one told me since I came that an express train passes first."

"So it does," was the guard's response.

"There's the carriage now," exclaimed the valet, suddenly. "Why, how stupid of that fellow to stop at the wrong steps!"

Aileen could see that this was the case, for the station buildings, such as they were, were on the side of the line where the two men stood, and opposite them another flight of wooden steps led from the lane.

As the girl listened she heard the carriage that had last arrived start again; the wheels rolling nearer, over the arch, and then on behind where she stood. A few moments later she saw the figure of a man, apparently young and of a distinguished appearance, standing on the steps opposite.

The stranger paused, and, turning, cast his eyes toward the spot where Aileen lingered. With a relic of the modesty that was inherent in her, notwithstanding her assumed character, she turned her head away.

She did not see him, therefore, when he looked along the rustic platform for his servant and baggage. He put up his eye-glass, but could see nothing of them. To his surprise, and evident disgust, there was not even a porter in sight.

At length the gentleman realized that he was on the wrong side of the line, and, with an impatient gesture and a muttered imprecation in some tongue unknown to the listener, he stepped down from the platform to cross the track.

It was then that Aileen Molyneux saw the peril in which the man was placing himself.

One glance she gave up at the signals—one swift glance, with the alertness and precision that were natural to her—and, at that instant, the signal was put on for the express to pass!

A loud shout arose from the farther end of the station.

The flash of the signal light showed to Aileen the stranger's peril. She could not see what made it more imminent. The man, for whose warning the shout had been raised, was apparently paralyzed by it!

Not one second's hesitancy was there in the brave heart of the fugitive Irish maiden. Not another soul had stirred. She alone was in any degree equal to the dread emergency.

She rushed across the track, and with one desperate effort pushed the helpless man back barely into a place of safety, and the wild express, like a demon disappointed of its prey, passed along in its cruel speed.

CHAPTER IX.

THREE OF A TRADE.

It was in the foreign quarter of New York, tolerably far down on the east side. The room was large, but not particularly lofty. In the center of it was a large oblong table, and about it were arranged a number of chairs; but there were only three men present.

At one end of the table sat Paul Polinski, the Nihilist, and opposite him was the face—too jovial, one would suppose, for that of a conspirator—of Dermot McDermot. The third party was Lark Lawless.

"Our friend, Mac," the latter was saying, "has brought with him a little invention of his own, which is likely, in my opinion, to be quite extensively untilized."

As Lark said this, he stooped sideways, and after feeling around for a few seconds, caught up what seemed to be a number of bound volumes held together by a strap. He then set the package upon the table.

"It has the appearance, you will perceive," he said, addressing Polinski, "of being harmless. Nothing likely to excite suspicion about it, I should say."

The Pole nodded inquiringly.

"The great merit of the invention is," continued Lawless, "that it can be carried anywhere without attracting attention."

McDermot grinned appreciatingly.

Lark proceeded to unfasten the straps, and began fluttering the leaves of the book that lay uppermost. He then took up the volume in his hand, and displayed a box. One by one he removed book after book, and when he had finished waited for the applause from Polinski which he expected to follow.

The arch-anarchist was silent.

"It's a big thing," said McDermot.

"Not very," smilingly responded his countryman. "Mr. Polinski can see that the cubic space is limited. The great advantage of the design is the unobtrusive character of its exterior."

Not a word from the Nihilist.

This, if less than the modest inventor had expected, was clearly more than he could bear.

"I had hoped," he said, striving to keep up his bland tone and expression, "that the sight of my little patent colporteur's outfit—I'm aware that I anticipate a trifle when I call it a patent, but no matter—I had hoped that the mere sight of my invintion would have suggisted an idaya to our valued fri'nd and collague, Mr. Polinski. I confiss I am a bit disappointed."

"I have always," said the venerable Pole, rising to his feet and speaking with great decision; "I have always been opposed to the waste of words. Already I have begun to see that with the great bulk of your fellow patriots, words of mine are vain.

"I rank myself with the enemies of tyranny, and not with the enemies of mankind!"

He sat down and relapsed into silence.

"The divil and Tom Walker!" was the rather ambiguous comment of Mr. McDermot.

"If my life were any use to the glorious cause of human liberty," said Polinski, after a pause, "I would not ask to prolong it. I have been weary of it these many years. But I cannot work with the tools with which you would furnish me. We must work apart, I see, and I regret it."

He arose to go.

"Not yet, Mr. Polinski, I hope," expostulated Lawless, pleasantly; "we, too, are going in a few minutes."

"I will wait for you outside, then," was the reply. "You may have something to say between yourselves."

Neither of the men made any further movement to detain him.

As Polinski stepped into the dimly-lighted passage, a figure which had been crouched close to the door moved quickly to one side and concealed itself in the shadows. The old man, his head on his breast, passed on, and saw nothing.

"After all, I believe I will not wait for them," he said, thinking aloud.

The lurker listened till he heard the Pole's footsteps in the lower corridor, and then stepping once more into the partially lighted passage, drew from his pocket a long, grayish beard, and adjusted it, soliloquizing:

"Better look as much like their friend as I can, in case of a sudden surprise."

He then drew around him the folds of a military cloak, not unlike that which was worn by Polinski, and again applied his ear to the key-hole of the room in which Lawless and McDermot were then by themselves.

"I don't think you understand the old fellow yet," the latter was saying. "You induced me to bring along that Sunday-school contrivance, suggesting that the old man would be proud and pleased to take a hand in carrying it."

"So I did. And what then?"

"What I want to know is, what your game was?"

"Oh, you do! Well, you see that whatever it was it failed."

"Shall I tell you what I think, Lark?"

"I wish you would, dear boy."

"It's just this. Your caper was too stark. The ould lunatic out coal-porterin', and then split on him."

"The deuce you say! You must think I have some strong reason for wishing our venerable friend out of the way."

"Faith, I do just that!"

The glimpse which the man known as Mondelet, for it was he, had of Lawless at this moment convinced the spy that the wily Lark, though he remained silent, was very willing that his companion should entertain that belief.

"All the same," whispered the supposed Frenchman, "Mr. Larkin Lawless is playing a deeper game than that."

This, in reality, was the case. Lark had been posing as a man of moderate counsels in all his conferences with Polinski, as indeed he was considered in his own party, and he meant to keep this up. But, to assure the success of the scheme he had in view in regard to the old anarchist, he felt that it would be necessary to cause a rupture between him and the more violent men among his co-patriots, of whom Dermot McDermot, with all his jollity real and assumed, was a representative man.

"Whatever it was that I had in mind," said Lawless, presently, "it has failed; but then, there are more ways of killing a dog than hanging him."

"Divil a lie in that. But what I fail to see at the prisint moment is, what use the king-killer is likely to be to our cause, living or dead?"

"That depends on how you take him."

"I'm thinkin', then, if we are to take him at all, it'll have to be as a man takes a wife—worse luck!"

"How is that, Mac?"

"For better, for worse, sure."

Lawless laughed.

"Polinski has a plan," he said, "which he thinks ought to serve our purpose perfectly. He fancies that, with his name behind it, all liberty-loving people will accept it."

He then briefly sketched the old Nihilist's nightmare, in which the visionary enthusiast had seen all Europe engaged in war, and a general chaos impending.

"By the powers of mud," exclaimed McDermot, "but the ould ragicide is a spared monument of the fool-killer's mercy entirely!"

"It won't work, you think?" queried Lark, his face wearing its most inscrutable expression.

"You know how it is yourself, Lawless. On our side, the men—and women, too, begorra!—that furnish the sinews of war, are beginning to expect their money's worth; and, on the other side of the herring-pond, they're clamoring like ould market-women for instant action. There you have the case in a nutshell."

"All that is true enough, I dare say; but, as you have heard me say many a time, I will not have it. I won't listen to it!"

"Then maybe you think there is something more than midsummer madness in what ould Polinski has been preaching?"

"Well, what objections do you see to it?"

"You know well enough, Lark. I've told you already. The people want something done at once. They want something they can read about in the papers every morning, if it's only a patriot or two hanged in Dublin."

"I know. But this scheme of Polinski's—between ourselves I don't pretend to say there's much in it; but it may, if we give them hold of it, serve to warm them up a little for two or three months to come."

"Well, anything that keeps them out of mischief, and keeps the cause going, is a thing to be welcomed. All the same, it's enough to make a ghost laugh."

"The trouble is," said Lawless, "that our people seem unable to understand Polinski. You, yourself, just now, were ready to fly off at a tangent when he made that declaration of his principles."

"Faith, I was that! But what is he, anyhow?"

"I'll tell you, Mac. He's a sort of man with whom you and I are not very familiar. He is neither rogue nor fool. Paul Polinski is an honest enthusiast."

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"The repale of the Union and Biddy Magee! No fool, you say, and with such a schame as that in his head?"

"No, and I'll tell you why. If every one who will listen to that scheme, and will try to make money and political capital out of it, were as honest and as sane as he is, the scheme would be practicable."

"He's got you, it seems, anyway. Let me tell you, though, what I think. A man who willl launch a theory that can only be carried out in a world of honest men would make a first class high priest of wisdom!"

So saying, Dermot McDermot arose, buttoned his coat, and proceeded to light a cigar.

Meanwhile Larkin Lawless sat cogitating.

"Wild as it looks," he meditated, "I can see where I can turn it to my account. I know that the old fellow must be handled with care. He seems drawn to me because he gives me credit for sincerity and acuteness as well. Then, I'm so moderate. By the way, I must set him right, tomorrow, about that invention of McDermot's. I must explain to him that I wanted him to see how impossible it was for him to effect a union with the extreme spirits.

"For myself, I must always treat him with the greatest deference, and greet all his proposals with enthusiasm. When all is ripe, I must begin to look about for a market."

As he arose, McDermot broke the silence.

"I'm always ready to do my level best, Lark; but, to tell you the plain truth, there has been a divilish good dale less in this whole business of late than I expected; and, at the same time, a man is kept on pins. Not that I mind that all, when it's made worth my while; but you know as well as I do—for it's the gospel truth—that the laborer is worthy of his hire. Very well; I don't get mine with anything like the regularity that my habits and my expinses demand.

"But that's a side of the question that don't seem to trouble you greatly."

"No," said Lawless, with a virtuous air; "you don't catch me touching any of their money, poor devils!"

"It's well to be you," rejoined McDermot, grinning sarcastically. "You're playing for bigger stakes—that we can all see. I'd like mighty well, for my part, to know what they are."

"Would you? Then I'll tell you. I'm playing for the independence of Ireland, and when that has been brought about, for whatever a grateful and generous people may bestow upon me."

"Oh, that's it, is it? A grand platform, Lark, me boy; but it ain't mine."

Dermot McDermot started to go down the stairs. There was no one in sight.

"Our fri'nd got tired waiting, it seems," he added.

"Your platform!" muttered Lark Lawless, as he reached the head of the stairway; "no, your platform is one that I can see in my mind's eye. It has a plank that hangs upon a hinge, and is supported by a bolt. There is a beam above it, and around the beam is a rope!"

Out from the shadows emerged a form like, yet unlike, that of Polinski.

It was Mondelet, but he spoke with no French accent.

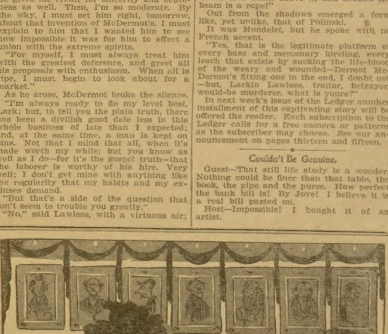
"Yes, that is the legitimate platform of every base and mercenary hireling, every leach that exists by sucking the life-blood of the weary and wounded—Dermot McDermot's fitting one in the end, I donbt not—but, Larkin Lawless, traitor, betrayer, would-be murderer, what is yours?"

In next week's issue of the Ledger another installment of this captivating story will be offered the reader. Each subscription to the Ledger calls for a free camera or patterns as the subscriber may choose. See our announcement on pages thirteen and fifteen.

Couldn't Be Genuine.

Guest—That still life study is a wonder. Nothing could be finer than that table, the book, the pipe and the purse. How perfect the bank bill is! By Jove! I believe it is a real bill pasted on.

Host—Impossible! I bought it of an artist.



"I was divorced from six of my husbands," says the coy widow, "but the seventh—that's him at the end of the line—died. Poor fellow! He was the only one of the lot that made me happy."

"I suppose," commented the wise bachelor, "that he was. It is easier to collect life insurance than alimony, eh?"

LOVE'S GUILTY DREAM;

OR

THE IDOL OF THE REGIMENT . . .

By
ADRIENNE ROUCOLLE.

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Begun in No. 29, July 16. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XVI.

IRENE AS A MATCHMAKER.

"Raoul, I have at last found the woman I want you to marry."

It was the above statement which caused Captain D'Oban to push his sister from him and look at her face to see if she was in earnest. But when he saw the grave lines of the features and the dark eyes full of resolution, he realized that his madcap sister was indeed plotting against his peace of mind.

"What! have those dark thoughts of marrying me off returned to your head? How many times must I tell you that I am satisfied with my lot?"

"Well, if you are satisfied, I am not, and that is the reason I will not give you any peace until you do. Listen to me, Raoul. I have sworn to myself that I would never marry unless you did. Until now I greatly feared I would not be able to find a woman who had enough good qualities to be worthy of my big brother. But this queen among women, this faultless creature I wanted for you, I have found at last, and now that she is found I have decided that you shall marry her."

There was something so earnest in her tones, so much love and gratitude beaming in her eyes, that a smile came to his lips, and drawing her on his lap as he used to do when she was a little girl he said caressingly:

"Who is this wonderful creature who is so perfect as to merit the honor of marrying an old, broken-down man?"

Fixing her clear eyes upon his face, she said slowly:

"Jenny Deo, the Colonel's sister."

Captain D'Oban started, and something like a blush tinted his bronzed cheeks; then he answered:

"I am too old for her, sister. I could not couple the glory of her summer with the frost of my autumn. I——"

He could not continue, for her hand was placed over his mouth, and in tones she tried to make scolding, Irene said:

"Not one word more or I will get mad. You too old! I like that, when in the whole world there is not a young man who can compare with you!"

"Not even Armand?" he questioned, having freed himself from the caressing hand.

"No, not even him," was the prompt reply. "Besides, Aunt Jenny—I call her that now—is not quite thirty, while you are just a little over."

Raoul laughed and replied: "Over forty, you mean. You surely do not suppose that I would resort to that feminine weakness of lying about my age in order to win Mademoiselle Deo's consent to a marriage she would afterward regret."

"Regret it? Why, I'd like to see that! A poet or an author, I don't know which, once said that woman is as old as she looks, and I add that it applies to a man as well. So as you don't look more than thirty——"

"With my gray hair?" he interrupted.

"Gray hair? Oh, how provoking you are today! As though you had any gray hair to amount to anything! Why, I could almost count every one there is in your head."

"Do so, sister, for by the time you have finished you will have forgotten your silly wish to marry me after I have reached the age of forty-two without choosing a life companion."

"Please don't joke, Raoul. I am in earnest. I do want you to marry Aunt Jenny."

"Very well, then; all joking aside, I positively refuse to marry her. She has, as you say, all the qualities a man longs to find in a wife; she is intelligent, handsome, of an old family of brave men, but she is barely thirty and I am forty-two, and that reduces all the other advantages to nothing."

"If you were younger, or she older, would you marry her?"

Raoul was silent for a time, then answered gravely:

"Yes; for I have loved her from the first day I met her. That noble soul, that life sacrificed to duty, first won my admiration, then my love. And it is because I love her that I will not try to win her as my wife."

"Very well, then. I know that you love her, and whether you will or not, you will marry her."

"How long since is it that I am to obey my sister's caprices?"

Irene burst out laughing for the first time during the interview, and as she replied the laughter returned to her eyes.

"Why, ever since I can remember; yet today that I am working for your happiness you dare refuse. Ah, beware, daring man! Remember the proverb, 'What woman wills God wills.' I will that you shall marry my Jenny, so God must have decided it also, if we are to believe the proverb."

"Then do your worst, little mischief, only if you fail, remember that I warned you before you began."

She leaped to her feet and putting her hands on his shoulders pushed him backward in his chair; and looking at him with a sudden mischievous expression on her face, said:

"Ah, you tell me to do my worst; very well, then, Captain O'Oban, I shall obey you!"

With this she left him, and as he recovered from his surprise at her sudden departure he thought:

"She has some plan, and my past submission makes her believe that I will yield as I have always done; yet in this I will remain firm; I cannot and must not link that young girl's youth to my worn-out existence; yet——" but only a sigh completed his thoughts.

When Raoul came to lunch after his duties at the barracks he found Irene in her most becoming visiting suit, while her hat and gloves lay ready for an early departure after luncheon.

"Going to make visits this afternoon?" he asked on seeing her.

"Yes," was the reply, but during the meal she was silent, almost nervous. When she arose to depart she asked, with unusual gravity:

"Will you be home all the afternoon, Raoul?"

"Yes. I have some letters to write, and this will take me till dinner."

"Then I can see you when I return" and Irene departed after casting a roguish look at her brother.

"She's up to some mischief, I'm sure," but as the conversation of the morning had completely passed from his mind, he did not think any more about Irene, and taking a seat before his desk he was soon busy with his letter writing.

Five o'clock had just struck and he was putting away his work when Irene entered the study like a bomb. Her hat was on one side, her face was flushed with excitement, and her eyes sparkled with happiness. Before Raoul had time to utter a word, two arms were around his neck and Irene's panting voice murmured in his ear:

"Raoul, you're the accepted suitor!"

In one bound he was on his feet, and confronted his sister with surprise and anger commingled in his face. But without giving him time to speak she continued hurriedly:

"This morning you told me to do my worst, and this afternoon I obeyed you. After lunch I went to the Colonel's and told Jenny I wished to see her brother in private. She was surprised, but took me to the Colonel's study and left us alone. He, too, was astonished that I should thus chase Jenny, but he ceased to be so when I told him that I had come to ask for his sister's hand in your name."

"Irene!" broke in Raoul with, for the first time in his life, stern accents in his voice. She did not let him finish, for she continued without being the least bit abashed by the angry light that for a while had replaced the mild expression of her brother's eyes.

"Now, big Raoul, it is no use for you to look at me like that, because it is too late to get mad, and when you hear all you will thank instead of scold your headstrong sister. Besides, a judge always listens to the guilty's plea. I am guilty, and I am going to defend myself to the bitter end.

"When I told the Colonel you wanted to marry his sister—hush! not a word until I have finished"—for Raoul was about to protest—"when I told him that you wanted to marry his sister, he caught my hands in his, his eyes filled with tears, and he told me that nothing in this wide world could have made him happier; that for some time he had guessed that his sister loved you."

She paused to take breath, then continued in the same excited voice:

"Do you hear, Raoul? She loves you, and like a great idiot you would have remained silent and let her wear her heart out for love of you. After his first emotion had subsided, the Colonel expressed his surprise that you had not the courage to come yourself and had sent me in your place. Of course I had to tell him that you had not sent me, but that I had come of my own accord, because I knew you loved Jenny but thought yourself too old for her, and that having been told by you to do my worst, I was doing it, knowing well that if I won the cause you would be very willing to rush in and reap the laurels.

"Oh, how the Colonel did laugh! I thought he would never stop, but after a while he seized me in his arms, kissed me several times, saying that I was a dear, noble girl. Then he became grave as he told me that what I had done was right enough, but that you would be expected to do the wooing. And with a merry twinkle in his eye he added: 'Tell that brother of yours that the siege of Jenny's heart will be easy, the fort is reduced to famine by long years of battle against love, and that only a few words will cause it to surrender. As to his age, let him not think of it, since many younger men have failed; still for him I am sure of success.'

"After that I thought I could safely promise that you would go tonight and lay your suit before Jenny, so I had her called in and I told her that you had asked for a private interview with her this evening. She blushed so prettily, my dear one, that I am sure she guessed what I meant you to do. Now, stern brother, you have heard my confession, and instead of asking for pardon for my offense, I am simply going to beg you to finish the work I have begun, and go tonight to offer heart and hand to my dear Aunt Jenny, whom I will then call Sister Jenny."

And Raoul—did he scold his willful sister sister for forcing him to marry the woman he loved? How could he; was he not as powerless to utter words of reproach as is the mother of the child who has robbed the fairest flowers of the garden in order to make a bouquet for her?

That evening Raoul departed for the Colonel's home to perform the pleasant duty Irene's self-will had imposed upon him. He found Jenny alone, but tonight a new unrest disturbed her usual calm, while the heightened color of her cheeks, the brilliancy of her eyes, told Raoul that she had guessed the object of his visit.

So, after the first greetings had been exchanged, he said, with a new emotion in his rich voice:

"Mademoiselle Deo, I come tonight a supplicant, hoping that you will pardon the presumption of my demand. Of my own accord I would never have found the courage to speak; but Irene, knowing my secret, has forced me to come. Yet, why hide my meaning in useless words? I love you more than I can express. It is not with the fierce passion of youth, for that, alas; has passed from me, but rather with the sober worship of old age. And this love I had sworn to keep a secret in my heart, for though my affection made me long to call you mine, my better reason showed me the folly of that hope, since so great a difference exists in our ages. The difference is not as apparent now as it will be ten years from now, as you would still be a young woman, while I would be on the decline.

"I must impress that fact strongly upon you, for I would a hundred times prefer separation from you rather than think that in any way I would induce you to marry me without fully realizing the consequence of the act. My words may sound unloverlike, but, believe me, it is because I do love you so deeply that I feel it my duty to speak as I do. Now that you know my unworthiness I leave you to decide if you will accept me, such as I am."

Raoul ceased speaking, and in spite of his words, the trembling of his voice, the quiver of his lips, showed to his listener that it was from the depth of his great, unselfish love that he had found the courage to utter the words he had just pronounced.

When he ceased speaking Jenny raised her dark eyes, misty with blissful tears, and, extending her hand, said without any false modesty:

"What to you seems unworthy, to me means happiness without end. Had you been younger or different in any way from what you are, I would not be giving you this hand, saying, 'Keep it.'"

He seized the extended hand, and his feelings getting the better of his vigilance, he questioned breathlessly:

"Mademoiselle, do you love me? Is that the secret I read in your eyes?"

She smiled and answered softly: "Yes, your love is returned, Captain."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE SWEETNESS OF SECOND LOVE.

After the conversation he had with Irene, Henri de Treves waited for the opportunity to speak to his cousin. It was a week after Irene's departure when one evening he entered the library and found Marguerite alone. She was seated by the fireplace in which a bright fire was burning. The gathering shades of a wintry twilight cast an uncertain gloom over the room, yet the bright flames brought out her face in bold relief against the ever-increasing darkness.

Her eyes were fixed in a vacant stare before her, and it was clear that her thoughts were far away. So absorbed was she in her musings that she did not hear de Treves when he entered the room, and it was only when he stood before her that she looked up with a half-cry of surprise.

"What grave thoughts are passing through your brain, Marguerite, that you are thus absorbed?" he asked, trying to appear gay, though her abstraction had once more awakened his doubts.

She looked at him, and as a sad smile passed like a shadow over her lips, she answered:

"I was thinking of the past, and the past, whether it be gay or sad, calls to the heart the regret one gives to the departed."

"Do you regret the past, Marguerite. Was it in any way better than the present?"

She started, and had the room been lighter he could have seen a sudden flush of crimson leap to her cheeks. For a while she remained silent, then, straightening her form, she replied, more to herself than to him:

"Yes, I do regret the past, not because it was better than the present, but because it was worse."

For a moment they did not speak. She again gazed meditatively into the fire, while he looked down upon her with a new hope in his eyes. If she thought the past worse than the present, surely there was no love left in her heart for Lucien de Lorgnac. He must try his fate. He took a chair and seating himself beside her said:

"Marguerite, I have long desired to speak to you, but until tonight my courage has failed. No doubt your father has told you his intentions regarding our future. He wishes his only daughter to bear the name which, because he has no heir, must go to the other branch of the family. To this end he wishes you to marry me."

She shuddered involuntarily, and he, mistaking its meaning, hastened to add:

"Don't tremble thus, for it depends solely upon you whether or not your father's wish be accomplished; I love you deeply, more, perhaps, than I could ever love another woman; yet you have but one word to say, and tomorrow I will have left you forever, telling your father that I could not think of you otherwise than as a sister. So tonight I wish you to be frank with me, I want you to tell me honestly if a union with me would prove distasteful to you. You must be honest, Marguerite, for I love you enough to sacrifice my dreams of future bliss if by so doing I could save you a little sorrow. I—— what!" he broke suddenly, "you are weeping! What have I said to wound you?"

She shook her head, but wept the more. Manlike, he was at a loss what to do, for there is nothing so embarrassing to man as the sight of tears.

Marguerite, however, soon mastered her emotion and looking up with her eyes still wet with tears, said as she tried to smile:

"No, Henri, you have not wounded my feelings. If I weep it is because I am forced to decline the love which would have made me so happy."

"Decline a love that would have made you so happy? I don't understand; if it would make you happy there is no reason for not accepting."

She rose from her chair, and, turning her face to the fire that he might not see the blush of shame which the confession she was about to relate had called to her brow, said, in low tones:

"Yes, there is a reason, Henri, for the past of which I was thinking when you entered tonight stands between me and happiness. Listen, I have a confession to make and after you hear it you will see that I am right and that the folly of an instant must be paid for by a life of sorrow and repentance."

A sudden throb of bliss made de Treves' heart leap with joy. He had so feared she would not tell him of that past love, which would have been the more dangerous for that very silence. Wishing to hear from her own lips the story of her passion for Lucien de Lorgnac, he let her speak on.

She told him all, not sparing herself one detail. He knew of the meetings at the house of the Marquise du Terrail, of the correspondence carried on by the aid of a dishonest maid. When she had finished her story she extended her hand toward him with a gesture of passionate pain and longing:

"Now, Henri, you must understand why I can't accept your love."

He seized that extended hand and, holding it a willing prisoner, replied:

"No, I do not understand what that has to do with the present."

"What! don't you see I can't consent to become your wife when that past love would always cast a dark shadow over our happiness? You would fear that some of my heart still remained with that broken dream of my youth, while I would suffer to think that my affection was doubted. Oh, Henri! why did I not meet you before that unprincipled man made love to me! Why did I refuse to listen to my father's advice! But these are only vain and useless regrets. I have by my fault spoiled my own life, and no matter what pain it will cost me, I must live it out."

She tried to take her hand from his clasp, but he held it firmly in his, as he said:

"Your reasons do not satisfy me, and the only consideration which would make me forego your love would be that you still loved this man."

She tore herself from him, and some logs on the hearth in falling gave out a million sparks and threw a lurid glow about her. She stood proudly erect, her head thrown back, her red lips curled in a sneer, and the mild light of her eyes was replaced by a flash of scorn; the embers, dying, had again plunged the room into semi-darkness, and he could no longer see the wonderful beauty that anger and shame had momentarily called to her face, but her voice, filled with wounded pride, came to him:

"Love him still! You surely do not think I am so devoid of pride as that! Though my youth and inexperience may have caused me to err, the pride of a de La Motte is still in my heart. Women of my race may give their love to those who are not worthy, but when they discover their error they know how to tear from their hearts a passion which would shame them. I will not tell you that I hate the Comte de Lorgnac, for hate, in women, is a different way of loving, but rather that I am so indifferent to him that were it not for the thought of how I disobeyed my father's will I would have forgotten that he ever lived!"

De Treves rose when at last she paused in her hurried words, and, standing before her, put his hands on her shoulders, and looking into her upturned eyes said:

"Then, my Marguerite, I will accept no refusal from your lips; you are and must be mine."

Thus Marguerite's fate was sealed. Her past love for Lucien de Lorgnac was nothing to compare with the thrill of passion Henri's words called to her heart. For a while neither spoke, both being too happy for words. Just then a servant entered and lit the gas, and the room was flooded with light. They looked at each other and could scarcely recognized in their transfigured features their commonplace faces of daily life. The sweetness of love, during a short space of time, was to cast over them the glow of beauty which comes to all once in a lifetime.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IRENE'S FIRST FRIGHT.

Marguerite de La Motte had been married several weeks, and Raoul's regiment was once more stationed in their summer quarters of Camp de Chalons and Irene and her brother were again occupying their cozy villa between the camp and Chalons.

Every morning Irene took long rides in the country, and often chance would lead her by the Castle du Terrail; as her eyes rested on the dark outlines of the western wing a maddening desire to know its secret would creep into her heart. She loved Lady Hilton, and admired her nature, which she felt must be strong and proud, and longed to save her from du Terrail's clutch, for to her it seemed he had been the indirect cause of Marie's flight. That he had not made her happy had been clearly denoted by her saddened face and nervous attitude. From the first a vague plan to save Lady Hilton from a like fate came to her, but in spite of her courage she dared not seek to discover the secret hidden in the western tower.

One night, however, as Raoul, the Colonel, Jenny, and herself were returning from an evening party at a castle near Vitry-le-Francais, they had, when passing by the Castle du Terrail, seen the four upper windows of the western wing dimly lighted by a lantern. Once more all of Irene's doubts returned to her, and she determined to know the truth.

The next morning, as the Colonel was walking past the villa on his way to camp, he heard Irene's voice calling him from the house.

"Please stop, Colonel. I want to catch up with you without running, for the Duchess claims it's unladylike." And when she had joined him she turned her flushed face and beaming eyes toward him, and continued: "But you must know that the Duchess is beginning to feel encouraged about me, since at Marguerite's wedding I went through my part as bridesmaid without making one mistake, or doing one unladylike act. Poor woman; she thinks it's her lectures that have worked the miracle, when in reality it is sweet Jenny's gentle grace and womanly bearing that have changed and improved little madcap Irene. But then, 'ignorance is bliss,' so the poet claims, and the Duchess will go to her death thinking she has civilized a savage."

She uttered a peal of laughter, then said: "How fortunate for Raoul that I am his sister instead of his brother, for I would never have asked you for Jenny's hand for him, but rather for myself. So Raoul ought to be thankful for my being born a girl instead of a boy.

"But here I am talking about something entirely different than I intended to in the first place. You were so kind when I asked you to let Raoul marry your sister that I am going to ask you something for myself, and I don't want you to refuse my request."

"If what you ask is possible to grant, you may depend that I will not refuse. Now, what do you want?"

"Not much: only three soldiers."

"Three soldiers?" he repeated in surprise.

"Yes, three soldiers, and my brother's orderly will make the fourth, while I will be the corporal."

"But what are you going to do with them? What plans have entered your madcap head? Are you preparing some raid?"

"No, I simply want to go hunting, and as I can't go alone, I thought to get some soldiers to act as bodyguard. Then the dear boys will be glad to get away from the camp and breathe the fresh country air. Ah! if I knew it was not impossible I'd ask for the whole regiment, but, being reasonable, I only ask for four."

"Well, whom do you want?" asked the Colonel, smiling at Irene's eccentric idea.

A troubled expression crossed her face for an instant, then she said thoughtfully:

"That will be the hardest thing to decide, for I love them all. But, let me see; I will take the three oldest of the regiment, for the change will do them more good than the younger fellows; besides, I am more sure of their courage."

"Their courage! What do you mean?" asked the Colonel.

A sudden blush purpled Irene's cheek, but she answered:

"You do not understand my meaning, Colonel. I want them to be rewarded because of their courage, that is all. Yes, I have decided upon those I want—Sergeant Legrand, Corporal Gros, and Petit Louis, the new recruit whom I was so fortunate as to save from a reprimand."

"When do you want them?"

"As soon as they can reach here, because I will not be at rest until I have had my little hunting party."

"It will be as you desire, and before ten this morning the boys will be here ready to act as your escorts. Now are you satisfied?"

"Oh, yes! Thank you a thousand times, but I must leave you, as I must ask Raoul for old Jean before he leaves for camp." And almost before he had time to turn she had left him.

Two hours later a happy group formed before the D'Obar villa. Irene, in a close-fitting hunting costume of green cloth, with a little cap set sideways on her dark hair, appeared more boyishly charming than ever. And by her side, proud of their post of honor, were the four soldiers who held themselves erect in their saddles to do more honor to their beloved mistress.

The little party soon started down the road at a gentle trot, which, when they were out of sight of the villa, changed into a wild gallop Irene liked. It was only after several miles that she drew in her horse with her usual suddenness, and in a voice she tried to make as commanding as her brother's, she cried:

"Halt!"

The soldiers obeyed and were soon crowding around her. When she saw they were listening she began:

"Boys, I want you all to give me your attention. Like the Colonel and my brother, you believed that we were to hunt birds and other things; well, you were mistaken, for though we will hunt today, the game we will pursue will be ghosts."

The four men started at these words and looked at her with such astonishment on their faces that Irene burst out laughing, and for some time was unable to continue. At last she said with a vain attempt to be grave:

"I see that my words fill you with surprise, so let me explain my meaning more clearly. The Castle du Terrail is some ten miles from Chalons. Its western wing is said to be haunted, and it is these ghosts that I am determined to see today, because, being as incredulous as Thomas, I must see before I will believe. For some time I have longed to visit the haunted room, but as I feared the 'ghosts' might have human form and human strength, I preferred to have some courageous men by my side to defend me in case of danger. Now that you know what we are after, those of you who are not afraid have but to follow my leadership to discover if ghosts exist or not."

And giving rein to her horse she was soon speeding swiftly away, followed by her friends, on whose faces the deepest surprise could be read. When toward noon the castle loomed in sight, Irene slacked the pace of her steed and addressing herself to the soldiers, said:

"If today we see real ghosts, we will be the worse for a good fright; if not, I hope that you will see that those who play ghosts shall get the fright."

Arriving in the court of honor of the castle, they dismounted, tied their horses in the yard and entered the house. Irene, having been there often during the time Marie had been the mistress of this princely home, knew the exact site of each room in the castle. She decided that none of the servants should know of her visit in the western wing; for that reason she determined to ask permission to visit, with her friends, the hall of the second story where hung the family portraits of the du Terrails. From that hall she knew that she could reach the haunted chamber of the western wing.

When the old housekeeper saw the young girl she raised her arms and cried:

"Lord a mercy! if it isn't Mademoiselle Irene! Why, you're the last person I expected to see here this day."

"Are you angry that I came to visit my old friend, Mere Crochard?" asked the young girl, as with charming familiarity she kissed the old woman's furrowed cheeks.

"Angry? Why, bless your heart, child, I never was so glad to see any one! And the other servants 'll not be sorry, either, since they just worship you. Ah! they always thought more of you than their own mistress, nor are they likely to like the new one. I suppose you know that our master is to marry again."

"Yes, I know, for I am to attend the wedding; but let me introduce you to my friends the soldiers."

When the introduction was completed, Irene continued somewhat nervously:

"Now, I have a favor to ask of you. These dear boys have never seen any fine paintings, and I would like them to see the hall where are hung the family portraits of the du Terrails. If you will give me the keys I will show them the way up and save you the trouble of walking upstairs."

The old housekeeper did not raise the least objection, and giving the keys to Irene, said:

"While you go on your visit I will get up a little lunch for you, for you must be hungry."

"That's so," admitted Irene, and with a farewell wave of the hand she left the room, followed by the four soldiers.

When they reached the hall of the second story they did not lose a minute in looking at the pictures, but walked resolutely to the farther end of the hall where the stairway began which would lead them to the third story or haunted part of the castle. Without hesitation Irene mounted to the top, and as she reached the last step, a cry, wild and heartrending, caused all color to leave her cheek, and with an instinctive movement she seized her brother orderly by the arm. For a few minutes all five remained motionless, but Irene, accustomed to mastering her emotions, soon recovered and said:

"That cry, my lads, shows us we will have to deal with human creatures, since those accents were too strong to come from a bodyless shade. Come, let us see if we can enter."

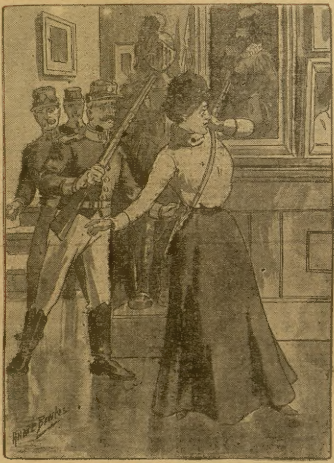
She tried to open the door, but found it locked.

"I thought so," she said, and without hesitation she began to try the keys confided to her care. After a while, with a glad cry, she cound one that fitted the lock; she turned it and had the pleasure of seeing the door open under the pressure of her hand.

She entered the room, followed by the four soldiers, whose guns were ready to fire at the first person who would dare lay hands on the one they had come to defend. Looking about they found themselves in an elegant boudoir, on the dainty furniture of which the dust of years had settled, but, though they looked in every nook, they found nothing.

Irene, still taking the lead, lifted the heavy velvet portiere which separated this room from the next, and scarcely had she entered it when a cry of terror and horror passed her lips, for she had just seen the frightful ghost of the Castle du Terrail.

In next week's issue of the Ledger another installment of this captivating story will be offered the reader. Each subscription to the Ledger calls for a free camera or patterns as the subscriber may choose. See onr announcement on pages thirteen and fifteen.



"A cry wild and heartrending."

Usually Short.

"Art is long!" quoted the sentimental girl at the art museum.

"Yes," rejoined her artist friend, "and I wish the same could be truthfully said of artists."

LOVE AFTER MARRIAGE

BY M. A. STARR.

"And at one time, Cousin Fay, you declared that you would never, never marry him!"

"Of course, I have not married him because I was in love with him," said Fay Winthorpe, with a light laugh.

Effie Gray, her cousin, sat oposite to her, secretly envious of all this splendor, the two being seated in a gold and dun-colored boudoir, hung with silken draperies, and carpeted in pale Aubusson, bordered with scarlet.

"Well, then," replied Effie, "why on earth did you marry him?"

"Because I was poor and he was rich. Because I was tired of giving music lessons, and he offered me all this."

"Fay, you are a heartless coquette!" cried out Effie Grey.

"No, I am not," said Fay, with a little shake of the pretty, golden curls. "You would do the same thing yourself, Cousin Effie, if you had a chance—you know you would."

And as Fay's laugh rang out, a sweet, defiant chime, she little suspected that her silly words had another auditor than Effie Grey—that the door leading into the rich merchant's study was ajar, and that her husband had heard every syllable she spoke.

True, Edward Winthorpe was not a young man. Previously he had never cared much about the idea of marriage, and the flame burned all the deeper and more tender from the fact that the Rubicon of middle age was passed ere he allowed himself to fall in love and marry the idol of his heart. He had looked on Fay Merriam as little less than an angel, and now——"

"I should have known this before," he said to himself, with white, ashen face and trembling limbs. "I ought to have known that spring and autumn were unsuited. So she has married me for my money! She shall have it, the dear child!"

No one ever knew the anguish of soul this man endured for the next few hours—at one moment bitterly regretting he had learned the miserable truth, that he might have gone on blindly in the belief that his beautiful young wife entertained an affection for him, and the next instant crying out that it were better to know the truth, even though it pierced him like a two-edged sword.

He had bestowed upon her the whole wealth of his heart, as we have said, the flame burning all the more deeply in that it was mellowed by age.

"But his conclusion was that he had made a terrible mistake in offering his love to this young girl—that Fay should never know the pang her cruel words had cost him—that he would do his duty; and might not his young and lovely wife in time learn to look upon him less coldly?

"Fay," said he, that evening, "I have tickets for the opera. Would you like to go, dear?"

"No, thank you," said Fay, listlessly. "I don't think I care about it."

"Then we will remain at home, and you shall talk to me," he said.

"I am tired of talking," pettishly retorted Fay. "I really wish you would leave me to enjoy myself in my own way once in a while."

"Do I annoy you, Fay?" asked Edward Winthorpe, with an inexplicable quiver in his voice.

"Awfully. I'm just in the midst of a delightful story, and I can't be interrupted."

"Very well; I will not repeat the offense, I assure you," he returned, quickly.

After this, a subtle and sudden change came over Edward Winthorpe's whole life. He was as courteous and attentive to his young wife as ever, but Fay felt that all the heart and soul were out of the courtesies, the scrupulously rendered attentions. To Fay Winthorpe, her husband's love was as fixed a fact in her mind as were the stars in the firmament above her head, and a cold chill crept over her heart when she fully realized that it was somehow slipping away from her.

"Edward," she said one evening, sitting opposite to her husband, "have I offended you?"

He glanced up carelessly from his book.

"Offended me, Fay? Why, what put such a ridiculous idea into your head, child? Of course you haven't offended me."

"I—I thought your manner was somewhat different of late," faltered the young wife, bending her head closer over her embroidery.

"One must not expect to keep up the honeymoon style forever," said the merchant, indifferently.

They tell us that life is full of antitheses; and certainly love is the strongest complexity in life. For, as Fay Winthorpe grew strengthened in the belief that her husband was ceasing to worship her after the idolatrous fashion carried out through the first weeks of her wedded life, she began to fall in love with the man she had married for money.

A few weeks only had elapsed when a crisis in the merchant's business rendered it imperatively necessary that Mr. Winthorpe should go to Charleston for two or three months.

Poor Fay stood aghast as her husband mentioned his intentions to her in the same cool, matter-of-fact way in which he might have criticised the book he now held in his hand.

"To South Carolina!" she gasped. "Oh, Edward!"

"My dear child, the journey will be a mere bagatelle! One need not mind travel nowadays. I shall not be later than January in returning."

"But—I may go with you?" she said, timidly.

"You! Don't think of it, my dear. My travel will necessarily be too rapid to incumber myself with a lady companion. I must go and come with the greatest speed."

Fay sat silent with a blur before her eyes, and a sickening sensation of despair at her heart. He cared no more for the society which once had been so dear to him.

"Oh, what have I done to forfeit the love he once poured out so fondly on my life!" she said to herself, time after time.

It was a pleasant October twilight when the merchant, wrapped in his overcoat, and his traveling cap pulled down over his eyes, paced up and down the deck of the steamer Nautilus, heedless of the tumult of weighing anchor. Through the dusk he tried vainly to catch one more glimpse of the spires of the city that held his young wife.

"She will be happy enough without me," he told himself, bitterly. "She bade me adieu without a tear, and it may be that my continued absence may teach her to think less coldly of me. Dear little Fay! My prayers may reach you even there."

A tear dropped on Mr. Winthorpe's cheek as he went below. On reaching his stateroom he was infinitely surprised to find that it was not empty. A lady sat there with a veiled face and drooping head. Edward Winthorpe paused in surprise—the figure rose up and threw aside the veil, revealing the starry blue eyes and pale face of Fay herself!

"Forgive me, Edward!" she sobbed, throwing herself into his arms. "I could not let you go alone. When I thought of your being away, perhaps ill, among strangers, I thought I should go mad. Hate me if you will, but I love you, my husband—I love you so that I cannot live without you!"

And she burst into a flood of tears.

"My sweet spring blossom—my love—my wife! Evermore, as now, close—close to my heart will I keep thee."

And that was all he said. But Fay Winthorpe had learned the secret of love.

Every cloud a silver lining
Keeps in store,
But a cotton-back umbrella
Helps you more.

THE CHICAGO LEDGER
32 YEARS OLD.

Published Every Saturday
—BY—
W. D. BOYCE CO.

All communications should be addressed to
THE CHICAGO LEDGER,
112, 114 DEARBORN ST.,
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.
Single subscriptions to the Chicago Ledger by mail $1.00 a year, 50 cents for six months, in advance. If not paid in advance, $2.00 a year, $1.00 for six months. Remittances should be made by Bank Draft, Registered Letter, Post Office or Express Money Order, payable to the Chicago Ledger. One Dollar must be added to all foreign yearly subscriptions to pay postage.

Entered at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, as second-class matter.

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Advertising rate $1.25 per Agate Line, per insertion, for advertisements in The Chicago Ledger and Saturday Blade.

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TRADES UNION LABEL COUNCIL
CHICAGO, ILL.

If afterthoughts are the best why can't we have them first?

That Vladivostok fleet evidently will bear watching and lots of it.

It's a waste of coin to advertise for lost friendship or umbrellas.

Worry kills more people than work because more people tackle it.

A woman has simply got to love something, even if it is only a man.

Intellectuality is the cause of baldness. So says a baldheaded scientist.

Wives may be the weaker vessels, but husbands usually go broke first.

God made the country, yet a lot of people sell their farms and move to town.

Onions are said to prolong life; at least eating them strengthens the breath.

It takes a nervy man to marry the widow of a poor devil who committed suicide.

When you feel like telling your troubles write them down—then burn the paper.

No woman will esteem a man whom she cannot trust, and a man cannot esteem another man who will not trust him.

A widow is usually more particular about the choice of a second husband than she was about the first.

If a man is always chaperoned by his wife he is pretty sure to meander along in the straight and narrow path.

When a bride's mother weeps it may be because her daughter didn't marry a man with less beauty and more money.

Teddie, Jr., has a Bible class, and can be depended on to knock the heads of his pupils together if they don't behave.

After his European experiences Dowie will be inclined to feel that anything Chicago may do to him is mere politeness.

In some parts of Colorado the citizens may object to obeying the law on the ground that it makes them too conspicuous.

General Ma has 40,000 Chinese troops on the Manchurian border. Doubtless they are merely on an excursion or pursuing a course in botany.

The sweet girl graduate who pounds her pillow until her poor old mother has breakfast ready will prove a great disappointment to some man.

IN MASQUERADE

OR

The Luck of a Free Lance

By WILLIAM R. EYSTER.

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Begun in No. 27, July 2. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE MARCH OF THE FREE LANCES.

"We are in the very cradle of murder."

I had found Jussac a very congenial companion, though inclined to be epic in his conversation. He was a roving young Frenchman with a taste for war, the principles of which he had imbibed at St. Cyr, and the practice of which he had followed under various flags; and sometimes, as now, without any flag at all.

What he had heard as to my antecedents I could only guess, but I suspected my history had been entwined with that of Finnicune, the free lance. On my past I had little information to give him directly, but incidentally some of my remarks may have seemed to throw light on the subject. "A friend of mine" was a convenient hero for more than one anecdote, illustrative of Spanish-American war as I understood it.

We had encamped for the night in a desolation which was suggestive. The trail that day had been but a mule track, which an inexpert might have had some difficulty in finding, and more in following. Such trails are used none too often, and two weeks' disuse in the growing season obliterates the best of them, save for the "blazes" on the trees through which, for a large part, they wind their way. This had been no journey for a woman, and I had been glad when Mrs. Marchmont failed to join us at the trysting place where our little expedition rallied.

Here and there had been traces of a former population. It was the remnant of an ancient road which we had lately left, and the outlines of an irrigating canal centuries old, near which we camped, that led to the remark as given above.

"A harsh name to give to our profession; but, after all, it is the right one. Year in and year out there has been war here, and a shrinking of the population until it has almost vanished. To think of the thousands of feet which once passed along here; and now it is a bypath for a few marauders!"

"If they could afford to build a road like that they must have had a population to travel it. The dozens of ruined cities tell the same story. Slaughter breeds in the very air; and an evening like this makes one long for a throat to cut."

"Yet they seem to be naturally a religious sort. Why, the old missionaries converted the heathen by the wholesale, and herded them like so many sheep. Taught them the gospel of labor and then enjoyed the fruits thereof. The poor devils never would work for themselves, but they could and did for the padres. For a fellow who just likes calm existence, what would be better than a grant to revive one of these old monasteries, and a population according to its needs—properly supplied with religion, of course? I swear, I envy the old monks who had a franchise of the kind. I'd almost be willing to spend my days here."

"It is the only sort of authority the natives do respect—religious—and it wouldn't make a murder less in a century. But before the monks and the monasteries, there was something in their line of civilization equal to anything these latter days can imagine. It had different objects, perhaps; but whatever they were the prehistorians carried them out as well. Their cities, their pyramids, their canals, their roads, are in evidence. Unfortunately, there was a population which old world economists did not know how to handle. When they undertook the job they killed off the people as a preparatory step. Then the old world got no further. When it came to repopulation nothing could be done. The lust of blood descended from the remnant of the aborigines as a heredity, and there continues a shrinkage of even that which is left."

In such way we talked as we lolled in the cool of the evening, with our little army around us.

Our guide was an old gambusino, or gold hunter, Ramon by name, who could have led us from Tegucigalpa to Texas and never once come in sight of a settlement. As we went along I had kept one eye on him and the other on the lay of the land. It was not because I did not trust him, but that I wanted to learn the ground we marched over. He thought I had a knowledge of my own, and was questioning his, but I did not undeceive him. What he said behind my back had a good effect on the cavaliers who marched with me.

We were now within the country of the enemy. There was no reason to forage beyond the line of march, and I had no desire to rally recruits to our standard. The men of influence who would join us in the rising had already been approached, and it was all the better if they were not seen again until wanted. When the proper hour struck they would arm their retainers and drive them off to the battle. The bulk of the forces would be peons, but they made good enough soldiers for the country and the cause.

The men with me were of a different stripe. Every one of them had seen service under fire. They would aid in organizing the force to be raised at Quezaltepec, and give it esprit for the desperate work expected of it and us. They were devil-may-care soldiers, yet good young men, and if they did not heed the nonsense Jussac and I chose to talk they were on the alert for other things which I might not have noticed. Before Jussac could air his opinions on the subject of heredity several of them started to their feet, hands on weapons, whilst I heard Ramon's whisper at my ear:

"Your excellency, some one advances. Would it not be well to halt them before they can sight our numbers?"

"There is the sentinel. What is he for? We will see if he knows his duty."

"But, your excellency, it may be a friend, though he comes like a spy. If the guard should shoot first and challenge afterward much trouble might it make."

"There will then be one less in our party, and for the rest—there will be more care in the future."

At the same time, I gathered myself up, and with hand on revolver stepped lightly in the direction of the sentinel.

Perhaps the warning of Ramon was a fortunate thing. The carbine of the sentinel was coming to his shoulder and as yet he had never said a word. I put out my hand and gently pushed his wrist upward at the instant the lurker came in sight.

"A minute," I said. "I think it is a friend." Then, to the seeming youth: "Arvance, friend, and give an account of yourself."

The youth was taken by surprise, after all: but it seemed a pleasurable one. With hands upraised he came forward.

"Ah, Major, thank Heaven I have found you. Another hour and I would have imagined myself lost, indeed. Now I am safe."

As I had suspected, the seeming youth was a woman; and the woman was Mrs. Marchmont.

"I started with a retinue," she laughed, seeing the dismay in my looks. "It has not all been slaughtered, either. In fact, we never came to close quarters with the foe, though it was a narrow thing. This morning we separated. Two of my escort laid a false trail upon which they hoped to draw the enemy; the third came with me. An hour or so ago he stopped to defend the way, and give me time to reach your camp. You will have to pardon me if I have led observation in your direction. It was not my desire, I assure you."

"So you are safe the rest makes no difference. Shall we go back to the rescue?"

"No need for that, I firmly believe. I kept my best man with me to the last, and a round half dozen could not get the better of him when he only has to look out for his own safety. I would have remained with him had he not strongly counseled otherwise. I am sure the enemy has divided, and at the outset there were less than a dozen, all told."

"Nevertheless, I'll send out a scouting party to bring in your man, aiding him if necessary. Perhaps it will turn out that we must dispose of those who followed you before we can go on. In that case I would as soon they began the attack. We are in no condition to take care of prisoners; and there would be a risk if any of them were allowed to get away and report."

It was a terrible thing to think of. Our name for this thing might be partisan warfare, but if we were captured the other side would treat us like brigands. Once in the field in force and they were welcome to do their best; but at present our lives were as dear to us as those of other men: and they were trembling, or would tremble, in the balance. I was at least enough in earnest to understand that.

Of course, this mysterious adidtion to our party was to a certain extent a surprise to my men, and I think for the moment there was a suspicion of some scheme of my own, grafted on the original project. All but Jussac—he took the thing as a matter of course, and asked no questions, even with his eyebrows. It was as well that Mrs. Marchmont used a little louder tone when she drew from its hiding place an official-looking document:

"And, by the way, it may be as well for you to look at the orders of the General at once."

I glanced the paper over and found the orders went but little further than I expected:

"To Colonel O'Rourke, Commander of Cavalry, etc: While exercising your own judgment in all military matters connected with your expedition, you will carry out the wishes of the bearer, Senor Don Juan Zelaya, as though they were of equal importance to the matters contained in your original instructions. MARIANO."

"They only accord with what I had reason to expect. Take care of them, however," I lightly remarked, tossing them to Jussac, who was alike adjutant, chief of staff and second in command.

Then I despatched him with half the force in search of my lady's guide, after which I saw to her comfort, while she made a hearty supper, listening to all needed particulars of her journey.

The men who started with her had been furnished by General Mariano, when it was found she was under surveillance and could not get away with the original expedition save at the certainty of all being followed. The outline already given is sufficient account of her journey. One thing I noticed, that all through her story there was no hint of her object in joining us; of course I did not question her.

About the time I began to think I should he hearing from the expedition, Jussac returned, bringing with him a shrewd little man, almost an exact counterpart of Ramon, our guide.

"And the enemy?" I asked.

"If this gentleman is to be believed they have flanked our position, and are already in the advance. With a hundred dollars they could raise an army; and it may be bribe the commandant of a whole State. I suspect, at least, that we have not heard the last of them."

Without hesitation I gave my orders:

"Two hours to rest, and then we move forward. The time for forced marches has arrived."

"And the hour for an ambuscade is near at hand," I heard Jussac say, as he threw himself down.

CHAPTER XXII.

MOONLIGHT AND WAR.

The two hours for rest were given out of deference to Mrs. Marchmont. Had we been by ourselves I would have never thought of losing a minute. The fact of her pursuers flanking not only her guide but our camp made me believe they suspected if they did not know the facts in the case, and were pushing on to give the alarm. It made no difference how unreasonable the suspicion might be, the fact of its existence was sufficient to induce me to take what precaution I could. If "Don Juan Zelaya" could not stand the forced march it would be an unfortuante check to my plans; but knowing what I did of her energy and courage, I was inclined to think she was good for as many hours in the saddle as any of us; and her horse, which had been brought in and attended to, looked in as fair plight as our own mounts.

The moon, almsot full, was perhaps an hour high when we were again in the saddle and pushing on at a trot. Jussac and Ramon were in the lead; Mrs. Marchmont rode at my left hand. I noticed she was well armed, and I thought I knew how well she could handle her weapons. So far as appearance went no one could have told she was not one of our regular force.

Along the old road we hurried, for a mile or more. Then we found ourselves riding in the gloomy shade of overhanging trees, where all sense of direction was lost. A little later we plunged through the moonlight which lay over a broad valley. Again, we ascended a mountain, and found ourselves creeping on the side of a cliff, with a precipice below us, and overhanging rocks above. But nowhere was there a sign that human beings were near. Never a light glimmered in the distance, nor did we hear the sound of a voice. Lonely though it might all seem, we rode in silence, implicitly following our guide, who never was at fault.

I watched Mrs. Marchmont a little anxiously as the moments went by, fearing some kind of failure; but she actually seemed to be gaining strength and spirits from the ride. When I saw her face in the monolight it was brighter; her form was more erect. She handled her horse with the ease of a practiced equestrian, and rode with the courage of one literally at home in the saddle. Once I bent over and whispered that if at any time she felt the need of it to let me know and I would call a halt, but her answer came quick and firm:

"Not on my account. Every mile made tonight brings us that much nearer the end. Make no delay. If it rests with me, be sure I will press on to the farthest limit it seems safe to go."

The man who had been her guide rode at her other side. He leaned over to speak:

"If we pass the next hour safely it may then be time to speak of halting; but the spot where we may look for danger is not far ahead. If we find it not there, little danger will there be of ambuscade tonight."

"Ah! then perhaps it would be well to apprise the advance."

"Ramon knows, and he will give warning in time. Then it will be to say whether we steal forward softly, or ride upon them—if they be there—with a rush. If I mistake not, he fought over this same ground once before."

Nevertheless, after a word to the man behind me, I rode forward at a somewhat more speedy gait, and placed myself alongside of Jussac.

"Eyes open. Before long we come to the danger point. Let the nature of the ground decide our course. If it seems open ahead we will charge. If we get fairly within the trap we dismount and rally together for a bout at close quarters and on foot."

Ramon heard and interposed:

"I doubt if there has been time to lay an ambuscade, your excellency. If there were men along this trail tonight we will find them at the Spring of the Blessed Virgin. Whether they be drawn up or not we can charge over them. No ground is there where we might fight with more equal chance against a greater number. If, however, they are in ambush, that will be a different thing. They will be a little farther on."

"But what sort of force may we expect to meet there—bandits, soldiers, or assassins hired for the occasion?"

"All, or none of them. It will be as it happens. Troops sometimes camp there on their way backward and forward. For a little we must take a road traveled often."

"Cannot we go around? I would rather they should suspect than know. However well we may play the game some one will get away to carry the news."

"Impossible. If troops are there and have notice of our coming they will have drawn back to the defile through which we must pass. In any case they will have sentinels there to watch against what might come from the other side. If, as I have said, we find them drawn up, on tardy notice of our coming, we can sweep them away as we go, following close to see that none entrench themselves in the pass."

I thought I understood the lay of the land, and did not care to ask further counsel of a gambusino, who was responsible only for our guidance, even though he might be experienced in partisan warfare, whilst this was my first assay at the art.

I held up a hand in token of silence, and we pressed on with a somewhat slackened pace, which brought up the main body.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Marchmont, somewhat anxiously.

For answer there came out of the shadows ahead the sound of a bugle softly blown, its mellow notes ringing through the night air to the tune of what I knew meant "boots and saddles."

A word to Ramon as to the width of the trail, the distance of the camp. By intuition I knew what was before us. The entire army of the republic scarcely outnumbered three of our full American regiments on the rolls; for discipline and fighting elan it was in comparison but an unarmed mob. It would be strange indeed to find any great portion of it here, in this haunt of desolation. Still, there was no knowing what strange antics fate could play. Some hint of our plans might have got abroad—as we had reason to suspect—and this could be a movement of concentration on Quezaltepec, either of the national forces, or of some company of irregulars, raised for the occasion.

"By fours until the command. As we come into sight, on left front into line, spreading out and riding over them. Forward! Gallop!"

In a low tone I spoke rather than gave my orders, and we swept onward and downward along the gentle slope. Beyond us we could hear voice and bustle of men, the clatter of arms, the noises of an unexpectedly aroused camp. It seemed to me we were in time, and no more; that the word had but just come, to arouse the sleeping braves. I doubted if we could have hit it more nearly to ease my own conscience. That we were outnumbered there could be no question; yet to strike them just when in the confusion of forming would give us all the advantages of a surprise, without the murderous advantage of shooting them as they slept. I even hoped some one would be kind enough to fire a shot or two as we came near, so we could have good excuse to open the ball. Probably, after all, I was too good a student of ethics to be a partisan leader in an internecine war.

Fortunately for my conscience, at that moment there was a shout, and then the report of a gun. A bullet, whistling close overhead, caused an involuntary ducking of my sombrero, and after that all thoughts of conscience or consequences were gone. Jussac fired at the flash, his shot being answered by a yell of pain; and then, our spurs roweled along the sides of our horses, our weapons were out, and with jaws hard set and keen peering eyes, at full speed we were forming an irregular left front into line, and sweeping on upon the confused knots of men who were hastily gathering upon a guidon.

There were a dozen cavaliers of my own, together with the two guides, Mrs. Marchmont, Jussac and myself. Seventeen of us, riding knee to knee, over a sward as smooth as a floor, and the enemy as yet in confusion!

We struck them with a mighty crash. There were shouts, curses, the discharge of firearms, the clashing of steel, and every now and then the sodden thud of a sword on head or shoulder.

"Keep straight on through!" I shouted to Mrs. Marchmont. "Joaquin, you will lead her in the way in which she should go, and I will hold you responsible for delay or neglect."

That was before we reached them. I still kept my wits, until I saw the guide crowd her horse over, and with a little circuit lead her by without danger of collision. After that I was in the fight with the rest, and was mad as the maddest.

Fifteen of us now, and we all held together. Of course, our line was broken somewhat; we no longer kept touch of knee, for there needed to be room for us to swing our elbows; and the enemy was putting up just strong enough fight to hold us to our work. I had seen at a glance there was no hope to kill all, or even to wipe them out so far there would not be force enough to follow when we had once broken through. Our task was to so far demoralize them that they would scatter in a route which would leave reorganization no easy task.

My followers, being Spanish-American, preferred to trust to the steel. Jussac, Ramon and myself worked away with our pistols, and for a time we had a section of pandemonium. I suspect, if we had been ten minutes later to the charge, they would have given us a rough time of it. As it was, they held us to it warmly for a minute or two—perhaps half a dozen.

Then the force broke all up into black patches, some lying still on the green sward, some scuttling away, yelling for quarter, whilst others plumped down on their knees with hands uplifted, uncertain whether to pray to us or the Virgin, but bent on praying anyhow.

The fugitives probably numbered forty. It was impossible to hunt them all out of cover, or yet to pursue them for any great distance. They had received a sharp lesson, and I doubted if they would rally again before morning. Some few had retreated in the direction of the pass. Though I did not believe they would attempt a stand, however much an advantageous position might lure them, I had a fear they might come upon Mrs. Marchmont. I brought my men together with a rallying shout, and, Ramon leading, we galloped away.

I am afraid to say what damage we did, and then, in the same breath, admit that of our little party there was not one seriously hurt. There were some scratches, to be sure, but there was no seat the looser in the saddle for the fray, and my veterans had now confidence in themselves and me. After this I knew they would follow a long way on the road to perdition if I called them.

We clattered off without any effort to conceal our route, or care for the men left behind us. I did not even take time to capture a prisoner or two who might, through force or fright, be made to tell us what party this was which had risen in our path, and how it had heard of our coming.

It was not far to the mouth of the pass, which I could see narrowed rapidly, with a roughening floor, that might prevent any but slow advance. One or two men could hold it against a dozen. Half a dozen of the fugitives could bar out way if they knew how to handle firearms. It was a good thing we had not hesitated.

As the road became blinder and more involved in shadow we moved more slowly. At any moment there was danger of a stumble which might ruin a horse, and perhaps break the neck of a rider. Ramon was in the advance and I came next, the rest following at as small a space as possible. Already the flush of victory was dying out. Such plight as this, with foes on either side, only waiting the knowledge of what box we were in to strike, was disheartening. Judging the feelings of my heroes by my own, I suspected a little more of this would make them willing enough to run away were there only open route which seemed safer. As it was, they were between two men who did not intend anything of the kind, since Jussac brought up the rear, and present safety would be best served by keeping on in the direction he and I wished them to go. For myself, I was willing to shoot at a moment's notice. The pistol emptied in the fray had been recharged, and with a precaution given me by instinct I bent low in the saddle, even while I watched for the slightest hint of the presence of an enemy. In that way it happened I was all prepared when suddenly, from the darkness ahead, flamed out a musket shot, and in the flash I saw Ramon tumbling from his horse.

Promptly I threw up my revolver, aiming with a certainty of calculation which led me to believe I could send my bullet right to the shot whence the shot had come.

As my pistol spoke there followed, not exactly with the report but so soon after that it was almost too close for an echo, another discharge, the flash from which almost blinded my eyes, though the bullet hissed well over my head. The hammer of my revolver was back again, and I was already drawing trigger when I heard a confused sound, above which rose the voice of Mrs. Marchmont:

"Help, O'Rourke! I have him!"

Off my horse I plunged, and without trouble found two contestants.

On hearing from one of them a second appeal I tore the fellow from his feet and flung him heavily to the ground. There Ramon, who had dodged unhurt from his steed, found him; and I knew what would be his way.

"Thank Heaven I was in time!" gasped Mrs. Marchmont, breathing heavily, yet still cool. "I knocked up his arm as he fired, and then grappled. Come! My horse is but here. Joaquin heard sounds ahead and went on, leaving me to warn you there might be a second battalion to meet. We must both have ridden past this villain in his hiding."

My men had halted in obedience to an order flung back. Now, Jussac forged to the front, and we all pressed toward the farther opening of the pass.

Reaching it we heard a bugle blown beyond; and then a pistol shot. We had not yet won even present safety.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Again, as we rode out of the little canyon, we formed knee to knee; but now it was hardly a question of surprise. Had we lingered at our original camping ground, this would have been made a death trap sure enough by the morrow, if, as I had reason to believe, these men had news of our advance. The body already defeated might have been hidden well enough by morning, ready to close in behind us. Then, as now, the men we were yet to meet could have been athwart our course.

Possibly the sounds of the first conflict had given the alarm; or, it may be, a fugitive had reached them. At all events, they were up and in the saddle. They were even in motion.

Well, what of that? We had the prestige of early victory; and I doubted if the enemy knew our force. I gave a hoarse cry which was echoed by my men, and, saber and pistol, we fell upon them.

This time I had confidence in my followers; and some little confidence in myself. Perhaps the air had something to do with it. I felt as though the heredity which Jussac and I had talked of was strong within me. If we killed them all there would be none to carry the news. If we slaughtered the most there would be few to follow us. Break through them, of course, we must and should, but our lives might hang upon what numbers and morale we left behind us.

My bridle rein hung over the pommel of the saddle; one hand grasped pistol, the other saber. Whatever might be said of my presence there, the present duty was to defend my life; and that was the better done the nearer to completion was the annihilation of the enemy. They were impersonal, unknown, an entity rather than a troop of human beings. And besides myself, had I not vowed to look after the woman whose wages I had once agreed to accept? We came out of that defile like a gang of fiends, and when we struck the front of the foe it was like a rending flash of lightning. Every bullet seemed to go true; every sword stroke to empty a saddle. There was a riving and a rending. The splintered fragments of the column were hurled aside, or dropped where they had been riding.

Then we rode on laughing, with a dozen riderless horses galloping ahead. We passed on, since we had left behind no foe that we feared. We scorned to gather up the demoralized and insignificant fragments.

In that short melee swift work was done, and my own part was something I did not think I would care to dream over.

As before, Mrs. Marchmont rode by me when the danger came, and it seemed safest to keep her thus. It was not possible to send her around the flank of the enemy, since Joaquin had not rejoined us to be her guide. She kept on the alignment when we charged, and when that was bent and distorted at the shock of meeting we moved together. I spitted a horseman who rode at her, thrusting at him across her horse's neck; she shot down another who came at me from the front. A bullet struck her horse in the brain; before he fell I had drawn her across the pommel of my saddle. Riding double, we went through the press, and when I had time to breathe again my pistol was empty and my sword was red.

"And they call that canaille soldiery!" exclaimed Jussac, veering around to my side. "Pouf! Could we meet in detail their whole army between here and Quezaltepec, Mariano might find his work already done against the time he comes to the front. We have scarce a man wounded; and there is none too badly hurt to dance at a wedding or eat at a feast."

"Right comfortable food for powder they were; and it is as well for us we found them nothing more. To me it looks as though there had been early word of our start, and these men were gathered to intercept us. If not, they were most likely on their way to the defense of that same city we seek. I doubt if we can execute that surprise as it was planned. I confess, if we have to take the field with an army it will please me better. I care not for massacre by surprise, and the slaughter of innocents."

I was glad enough to have the chatter of Jussac. At that moment I did not care to speak with Mrs. Marchmont. I could feel she was trembling with emotion, and knew there would be a reaction now the strain was over. If anything could make us believe that what we had passed through was but a cheerful game it was the persiflage of the frivolous Frenchman.

There may have been something of the kind on his mind, for he added more gravely:

"Perhaps I speak too lightly. I had it on my tongue that the thing had been a joke, but I must not forget Senor Zelaya is new to such things, and has had an escape. Keep on a moment and I will have them rope one of the horses galloping in the advance. No use for any steed to carry double with so many second mounts in view."

So we rode together, she and I, until one of the men brought the horse he had been ordered to capture. Then we went on side by side once more, with no present thought to halt, and little to say of the actions of the night. Until day dawned, at least, what she had seen was not a pleasant thing for a woman to talk about.

Daylight came at last, breaking on rather a haggard-looking set of mortals, but Ramon and Joaquin had so well led us that we had come to a spot where it was not likely we would be followed or found. After a scant and hasty meal we threw ourselves down for a rest which well we had earned.

All save Joaquin slept long and sound. He was up and away in an hour or so. It was his intention, as it was his orders from Mariano, to reach the city in advance, and apprise those who were to be our friends of our coming. Within twenty-four hours we expected to be within supporting distance of Quezaltepec.

The farther ride that night was over byroads, and along mule paths but little trodden. On the entire journey from dusk to dawn not a soul was met. As the stars faded we reached our last hiding place and looked down upon the city in the distance. If Joaquin had done his work well we would hear from the leaders before the day was well over.

The fiction in regard to "Senor Zelayo" was kept up, though Jussac had recognized the madame from the first, and the rest of the party knew well enough the masquerade, imagining something of its meaning. What her real object was I myself could only guess, though I knew it was not the same as ours. So far, I had asked no question, and received no hint, though I believed that before the time came for action I would be told everything. During that morning she sat by herself for the most part, gazing away toward Quezaltepec, and evidently deeply engaged with her own thoughts and plans. The rest of us were more inclined to sleep, and lazied away the hours without much thought of what was going to happen when we emerged from our hiding place.

Outside of Mrs. Marchmont and the sentinel, I was the most wakeful of the party. More than once I spoke, advising her to try a more restful attitude, and a stronger effort to obtain sleep. I told her that the return journey would probably be made at a more exhaustive pace, even, than the advance; and that it would be well to prepare for it.

She smiled wearily and shook her head.

"By and by I will rest. Now I cannot. Have no fears. If we succeed I will not fall by the way. If we fail, I care not how soon I drop out of the race."

"But I care; and a great deal. I have sworn we go back together, or I go not back at all. You have seen something of me, and know whether I am likely to keep my oath."

She looked at me keenly, and I even imagined I could detect the traces of a blush on the cheeks which were already taking on a sallow tinge. There were other things I had thought of saying, and this would have been a good time for them; but somehow, at this moment, when the bond of camaraderie had never been stronger between us, I felt less than ever like speaking. I did not understand myself—still less did I understand Mrs. Marchmont.

One thing was certain. Just then she did not care to hear me speak more definitely, but stopped me with a word or two of thanks for my support, and turned away. I judged she desired to be alone, and respected her wishes.

Joaquin [illegible] Early that afternoon we had visitors, who came out stealthily, and who did not tarry long; yet I judged they were men we could depend on. We talked over matters as Mariano and I had talked them over; and the time of the movement was fixed for the night of the following day. Already a picked body of men had been notified, and I had assurances they would be at the rendezvous at the moment of my coming, ready to move promptly. If no unforeseen contingency arose it was certain the project would prove a success.

It was well for my authority that I had showed a capacity to lead as I came along. All this was not arranged without friction. O'Rourke was a name unknown, and not likely to arouse enthusiasm, or draw recruits to the standard of the revolution. These people would rather have seen Mariano himself at the head of his forces, coming to stay. At the outset they showed that the plan as I unfolded it was not altogether to their liking.

"Let the matter lie a day longer and we will seize Quezaltepec with five hundred fighting men, put Gonzales at the head, and hold the city until Mariano comes."

That was the thing to do according to the hotheads of the party—and when it came to such questions they all seemed to be pretty warm. If I had been what they imagined, I would have probably coincided; but the fact of the case was, I had already done enough for glory, and about all I cared for was Mrs. Marchmont's view, of which I had been pretty thoroughly apprised.

"Excuse me, senors, but I happen to be a soldier, acting under orders. If I came here as a private gentleman, and joined in your plot, I should with cheerfulness accept your views. Should I deliberately disobey the commands laid upon me I would expect to be shot when General Mariano came—an' be the powers, shot Oi ought to be. Oi'm too owld a soldjer to expict otherwoise."

I rapped out those last words in my richest brogue for the benefit of Mrs. Marchmont. I thought it about time she heard again the dialect of the O'Rourke.

She smiled slightly, and gave me a swift, grateful nod. Her view was the same as my own, though she was taking no part in the council beyond that of a listener.

My firm stand had its effect, even if the men did not at once yield. Seeing, however, that they wavered, I played the part out according to the traditions and training of the stage; which, after all, could be the only true guide in a situation like this. I swung out my saber with a graceful flourish and laid it down between us.

"There," I said, waving my hand at the blade—which certainly was not as bright as it had been. "There is my sword, red with the blood of the despot's minions. On which side of it do you stand? Those who are not on my side are for the tyrant; those with me are for the freed republic. Where are our friends; where are our foes?"

That settled it. They crowded around, shook my hand, and for the present I was in the saddle to lead as I had a mind to. Jussac stood back with folded arms, an admiring watcher; and I knew he was with me heart and soul. After that, I could afford to provide for contingencies.

"Now, senors, since we understand the work which is wanted, a word as to what we have to do. The fewer who appear in this matter the better, so long as it is carried through. It may happen, however, that it will be impossible to retreat according to instructions. One hundred men who will follow me to the camp of Mariano, I want. If you choose to have five hundred to hold the city in case of need, have them ready, but unseen. If they are not wanted, why should they cast the die before their turn? If we call for them, then it will be no more than you have urged. I tell you frankly, I am here to rescue Gonzales, not to overthrow Baridos—that is to follow."

In this way we managed to come together on a satisfactory understanding. When the conference closed, to my great surprise Mrs. Marchmont decided to go away with one of the most prominent gentlemen of the party—Senor Don Domingo. It is true, we had all received invitations to hospitable entertainment, but Mariano had beforehand counseled otherwise. As a reason, I suspect it was that in case of failure there would be less danger of compromising our friends.

She went away, then, with Don Domingo, after giving me a parting shake of the hand.

"Remember," she whispered, "my orders are of equal importance with those originally given, so long as they run together. I will join you at the rallying place, and perhaps explain more fully. Good-by."

Under the circumstances I had nothing to say, beyond a caution of prudence. I was a soldier under orders, and I showed her I knew how to accept such things without question.

Besides, I had a little excursion of my own to make. I did not like the idea of fighting over ground I was entirely unacquainted with if it could be avoided. I had decided to enter Quezaltepec under the guidance of Ramon; and at least obtain an inkling of the lay of the land. I was prepared for some such scheme, and when I had opened out the valise I had brought with me, and arranged my garb in accordance with the principles of my profession, I looked as little like the desperado Irishman who had led his dozen to victory as I could have wished.

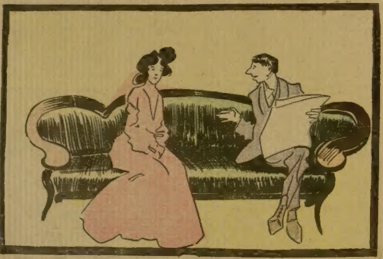
Jussac watched the preparations with interest, but offered no objections. At the last moment he asked: "If you return not in spite of it all—what then?"

"You fall heir to my eagles, that is all. Move at the appointed time—do the work—receive the honors. Nevertheless, you will find me on hand."

I was not as certain as I pretended; but the excursion seemed reasonably safe. Without any faintness of heart Ramon and I set out.

Next week's issue of the Ledger will present further chapters of this highly interesting story to the reader. It will pay you to follow the characters to the end of the narrative. Each subscriber to the Ledger is entitled to our free cameras and patterns as advertised on pages thirteen and fifteen.

DID HIS BEST.



Mrs. Pepkins—I don't believe you tell me all you know.
Mr. Pepkins—Yes, I do, darling, and many, many other things besides.

A Stingy Woman.

Employment Agent—Why did you leave Mrs. Goodsoul so soon? She is said to be a very nice woman.

Domestic—Nice! She's that stingy she begrudges the very air ye breathe.

"You amaze me."

"Judge fer y'rself. Kerosene isn't worth over twelve cents a gallon, is it?"

"No."

"Well, she 'most had a fit 'cause I started to pour a few drops of it in th' kitchen stove."

A Reasonable Suggestion.

Mrs. Spratt (vigorously shaking her sleeping spouse)—John! John! There's a burglar in the house!

Mr. Spratt (protestingly)—See here, Manda! If, instead of shaking the life out of me, you'd go and shake that burglar, you'd be doing some good.

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Cause for Complaint.

Mrs. Stuckupp—The editor of the Daily Slashem is a mean old thing, so he is.

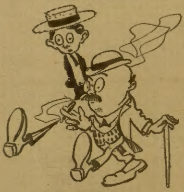
Stuckupp—What's the matter now?

Mrs. Stuckupp—I sent him an account of out literary club meeting, in which I referred to myself as being "well known in polite circles."

Stuckupp—Well?

Mrs. Stuckupp—The measly paper said I was "well known in police circles."

No Obligations.



"But you used to laugh uproariously at Borely's stories?"

"Ye-es; but I don't owe him anything now!"

Point of View.

"And to think," said the young man, with a large open-faced sigh, "my best friend eloped with the girl I was engaged to."

"All of which goes to show that he is still your best friend," rejoined the hard-hearted old bachelor.

One Minister's Failing.

Deacon Grabhard—Rev. Du Goode says he doesn't believe in raising money by church fairs, suppers, concerts and lotteries.

Deacon Pinchpenni—H'm! He's altogether too conscientious for a minister.

OLD FASHIONED

But Still in the Fashion.

It is an ever new and interesting story to hear how one can be entirely made over by change of food.

"For two years I was troubled with what my physician said was the old-fashioned dyspepsia.

"There was nothing I could eat but 20 or 30 minutes later I would be spitting my food up in quantities until I would be very faint and weak. This went on from day to day until I was terribly wasted away and without any prospects of being helped.

"One day I was advised by an old lady to try Grape-Nuts and cream, leaving off all fatty food. I had no confidence that Grape-Nuts would do all she said for me, as I had tried so many things without any help. But it was so simple I thought I would give it a trial she insisted so.

"Well, I ate some for breakfast and pretty soon the lady called to see her 'patient,' as she called me, and asked if I had tried her advice.

"'Glad you did, child; do you feel some better?'

"'No,' I said, 'I do not know as I do; the only difference I can see is I have no sour stomach and, come to think of it, I haven't spit up your four teaspoons of Grape-Nuts yet.'

"Nor did I ever have any trouble with Grape-Nuts then or any other time, for this food always stays down and my stomach digests it perfectly; I soon got strong and well again and bless that old lady every time I see her.

"Once an invalid of 98 pounds I now weigh 125 pounds and feel strong and well, and it is due entirely and only to having found the proper food in Grape-Nuts." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich.

Get the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in each package.

More Egotism.

"I suppose," sneered the sheep, "you are proud of the fact that you tip the scales at the 700-pound notch?"

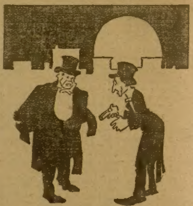
"You bet I am," replied the obese porker. "I'm one of those self-made hogs you read about."

Point of View.

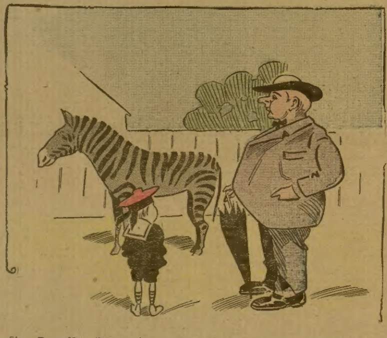
"A smile," remarked the long-haired poet, "is the same in all languages."

"G'wan!" exclaimed the bartender. "Dey varies frum one t' four fingers. See?"

Can't Take Risks.

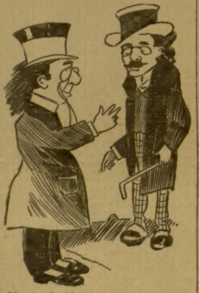


Slimly—Say, I'm afraid to go home alone.
Stout—Why, isn't that your new gun?
Slimly—Yes. And that's just the trouble. I can't afford to be robbed of it.



Olney Papa—Now, then, my boy, can you tell me what kind of an animal that is?
Olney Kid—Sure, Mike, I can. It's a mule with his football suit on.

His Idea.



"A man shouldn't commit bigamy."

"That's right. No man can serve two masters."

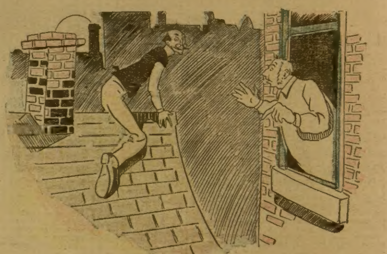
A Consoling Thought.

Bramble—Yes, I'm ugly. I know I'm ugly; but there is one great consolation.

Friend—What is that?

Bramble—If ever I should become great, and the American people should resolve to erect a statue to my memory, they won't be able to make me out any uglier than I am.

BOUND TO GET IT RIGHT.



Mr. Neighbors—What on earth are you doing, Jones?
Jones—'Sh! I'm watching to see at what time our new cook is in the habit of coming home so that I can make rules about our servants' retiring.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE HEALING

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You Can Be Cured Whether You Believe in Christian Science or Not.

Over a million cases of disease in every form are now to the credit of Christian Science Healing. Most of these were cases that the doctors had given up as "incurable." Many more were chronic maladies that had baffled their skill for years. All were quickly cured; some were cured instantly. The evidence on these facts is simply indisputable and the curing still goes on. There can be no mistake or misstatement about it. The healers and their work are in public view. As a C. S. healer my many marvelous cures have startled the world. During the past 12 years I have healed diseases of almost every known kind and in every stage of severity. They included many surgical cases where operations were otherwise threatened. I cured cases that were far away from me, as well as those near at hand. And I tell you in like manner that wherever you may dwell whether one or many physicians have failed to give you relief, if you report the case to me and so desire, you shall be cured. This is no vain or idle promise. My past success fully justifies it. You can be cured whether you believe in Christian Science or not. You can be cured whether in this city or thousands of miles away from me. In our Christian Science Healing distance is of no account; disbelief is not any hindrance; disappointments of the past only make stronger grounds for hope. All you really need is the wish to be healed.

I have just published a little book in regard to this blessed truth called "A Message of Health and Healing." If you write to me I will gladly send you a copy free. It gives many interesting facts and convincing testimonials. Enclose 2-cent stamp for postage. S. A. Jefferson, C. S. B., Suite 604, 112 Dearborn street, Chicago, Ill.

Unreliable.

Edyth—So your engagement with Tom has been declared off, eh?

Mayme—Yes. He promised to return the lock of my hair that adorns his locket, but he has failed to do so.

Edyth—Well, I never did have much faith in those alleged hair restorers.

In the Wrong Office.

Caller—We are very rich, and we wish to marry our daughter to a count, a marquis or a duke.

Clerk (with dignity)—You are in the wrong office. This is a matrimonial agency. You will find the International Purchasing Agency two doors to the left.

Proof Positive.

Mrs. Neighbor—Your husband seems to be a man of excellent judgment.

Mrs. Newed—Of course he is. He married me, didn't he?

Born Diplomat.

"This coffee is weak as water," growled the boarder who pays spot cash.

"Then it is sufficiently strong," remarked the boarder who was a month in arrears. "I have seen water hold up an ocean vessel."

And the landlady was so tickled she extended another week's credit to the wily delinquent.

Had Thought About It.

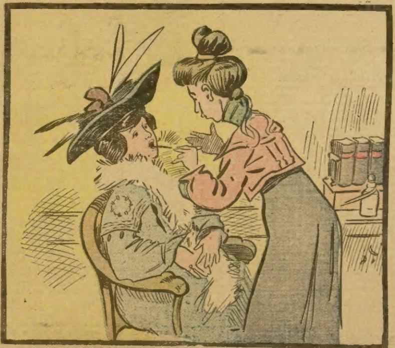
Kind Lady—Do you ever think of the solemn fact that we all must die?

Tramp—Yes, mum, often.

"So do I, and I hope to die the death of a Christian. Have you ever thought of the death you would like to die?"

"Yes, mum. I'd like to be drowned in a beer vat."

THE ETERNAL WOMAN.



"Can you see anything the matter with my throat?" asked the woman who was consulting the new lady physician.

"Your throat? Goodness me!" exclaimed the lady doctor. "I had forgotten that. I was counting how many of your teeth were filled with gold and how many with amalgam."

In After Years.

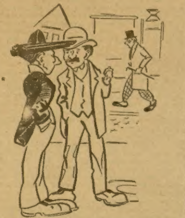
Bleeker—Huh, you evidently think you know it all.

Meeker—Not guilty. But there was a time when I thought I knew a little.

Bleeker—When was that?

Meeker—Before I was married.

His Work.

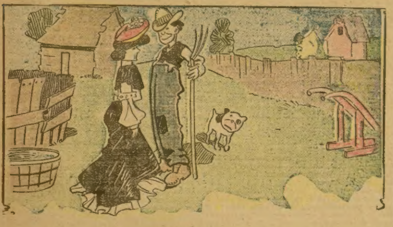


Smiggs—There goes a man who has done much to arouse the people.

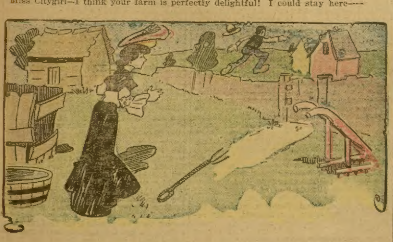
Smaggs—Great labor agitator, eh?

Smiggs—No; manufacturer of alarm clocks.

There are no game laws to handicap the man who hunts trouble.



Miss Citygirl—I think your farm is perfectly delightful! I could stay here——



"Forever! Mercy! what's the matter?"

Hayrick Junior—Ye can't ketch me on none o' them leap-year tricks. I'm promised to Sal Perkins.

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SHE IS STRUCK.

Her hair is soft and silken,
Her limpid eyes are blue;
I think she's sweet and pretty
And others think it, too.

The folks about the village
Declare it's plain to see
I'm struck beyond comparison
And she is struck on me.

It's true that I am smitten,
I don't deny the fact;
I dare not try to hide it,
I don't possess the tact.

It's true that she is smitten,
But hang the pesky luck,
She's told me by her actions,
It's on herself she's struck.

JAPAN'S CIVILIZATION OUTSTRIPS RUSSIA'S.

In a letter to the New York Sun, Walter J. Ballard of Schenectady, N. Y., compresses some remarkably interesting information regarding Japan and Russia. He says:

"Japan, with her 47,000,000 population, has 4,302,625 pupils in her elementary schools, or 91 in every 1,000; while Rusisa, with 130,000,000 population, has only 4,193,594, or 32 in every 1,000. Similar disproportion in favor of Japan applies to secondary schools and universities.

Japan has 4,852 postoffices, equal to 1 postoffice for each 9,700 people; Russia has only 6,029, or one for each 21,500 people.

"Japan bought of us last year $21,000,000 worth of goods, while Russia was our customer for only $17,000,000.

"Japan has a commercial marine of 734,413 tons, against Russia's 633,822 tons. That is, 100,591 tons more for 83,000,000 less people.

"Japan has about the same area as Montana, with more than half as many people as there are in the whole United States.

"Japan raises sufficient agricultural products to feed her own people and leave a good quantity for export.

"Japan had a foreign commerce in 1896 of $145,000,000, while in 1903 it was $313,000,000, more than 100 per cent increase in seven years.

"Japan has gold, silver, copper, lead, tin and mercury in abundance, besides coal and iron.

"Japan has every kind of manufacturing—cotton goods, telescopes, microscopes, watches, knives, spoons, electric machinery, matches, clocks, woolen goods and a host of other lines. In 1870 manufacturing in Japan was almost nil; now she has over 8,000 factories of various kinds.

"Japan has railroads gridironing the empire, electric light plants in nearly all the cities, and telegraph lines all over the country.

"Japan did not have a single battleship in 1895, while now she has six of the first class and many war vessels of inferior classes.

"Japan has facilities for making everything necessary for the construction and equipment of railroads except locomotives.

"Japan runs her railroads with native labor entirely, from the general superintendent down, including the train despatchers.

"Japan has over 3,000 miles of railway and 1,500 miles of telegraph lines in operation. Twenty-five years ago not a mile of this system existed.

"Japan is mining over 2,000 tons of coal per day, nearly 1,000,000 tons yearly, and the supply is of fine quality, apparently inexhaustible. Twenty-five years ago the output was only 300 tons per day.

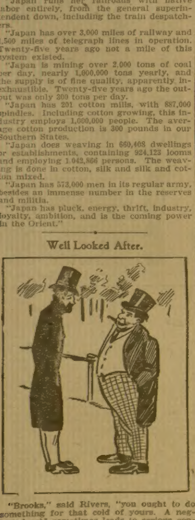
"Japan has 201 cotton mills, with 887,000 spindles. Including cotton growing, this industry employs 1,000,000 people. The average cotton production is 300 pounds in our Southern States.

"Japan does weaving in 660,408 dwellings or establishments, containing 924,123 looms and employing 1,042,866 persons. The weaving is done in cotton, silk and silk and cotton mixed.

"Japan has 573,000 men in its regular army, besides an immense number in the reserves and militia.

"Japan has pluck, energy, thrift, industry, loyalty, ambition, and is the coming power in the Orient."

Well Looked After.



"Brooks," said Rivers, "you ought to do something for that cold of yours. A neglected cold sometimes leads to serious consequences."

"This cold of mine isn't neglected," crossly answered Brooks. "Five or six hundred of my friends are looking after it."

RUBY GORDON'S LOVE;

Or

The Mistakes of a Life-Time.

By LIBBIE SPRAGUE PHILLIPS.

[Copyright, 1904, by the Author.]

Begun in No. 26, June 25. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXII.

Life at Elmwood was greatly changed. A gentle, high-bred lady ruled the house, and every one was pleased to obey her. The servants had loved poor Bessie, but they adored Mrs. Armytage. She was a wonderfully fascinating woman, and much suffering had made her gentle and thoughtful of the comfort of others. Reuben Armytage noted this and thought how different she was from what she had been in the old days when she had ignored his every wish, and had broken his heart by her waywardness.

But though time had softened her heart and changed her manner, her face remained almost unaltered; a delicate bloom still lingered on it; and in spite of her forty-five years, her color varied like a girl's. And it was hard for the old man to realize, when looking at the youthful-looking face, that so many years had rolled by since that never-to-be-forgotten night when he had made the mistake of his life, and turned her from his door.

He scarcely let her get out of his sight now. "I have been alone so long," he said to her one day, "that I cannot bear to lose sight of you, even for one little hour. Give me all your time, darling; let us spend our remaining years side by side; let us never be parted for a day." Thus a new life began for both, a life that bid fair to be full of happiness and joy.

Ruby, too, became more joyous than of old. True, the thought of her blighted love and hopes would ever be with her—she would never be entirely happy; but no life can be utterly desolate that is blessed with a father's and a mother's love, and Ruby's life was thus blessed now. Mrs. Armytage almost worshiped her beautiful daughter, and there was something pitifully touching in the father's love for the child whom he had so deeply wronged.

Over and over again he had begged her forgiveness, and if he could have now brought about a marriage between her and Lawrence he would have done it gladly.

"Such a fool as I have been!" he often said to himself, as he thought of how, but for him, she would have been a happy wife; and the boy whom he loved, and whose life was darkened and embittered, would have now been, with such a wife, happy beyond words, and at home with them.

He missed Lawrence. Having loved him as a son for so many years, it grieved him that he had left the old home, although he honored him for his independence.

Addie Vincent was still at Elmwood. It had been arranged that she and baby Ruth were to remain there until spring. Lawrence would have become settled in his work by this time; then he would hire a house and she and baby were to go to him.

"I must have my child with me," he had said. "She is all I have, and I cannot live without her! But I shrink from hiring a stranger to take charge of her," he added, looking appealingly at Addie; and as she had become strongly attached to the child, she finally consented to stay with it for a while longer.

She was a beautiful child, full of life, of animation and vivacity; but she had inherited her mother's passionate nature, and already one could see that she could be led by love, but by nothing else. She adored her aunt, and, in the same eager, impassioned way, she loved her father. If either of them spoke she obeyed because she loved them, but she detested the nurse and she disobeyed her because she did not love her.

Addie would often hold the child in her arms, and gazing into the little beautiful, dimpled face, sigh deeply. She would be as her mother had been, visionary, full of poetry and romance, and with the terrible force of passion belonging to such highly-strung natures, she needed the care and the training of a most wise and gentle mother, and she was left alone.

Addie's own blighted hopes made her aching heart long for the love and sympathy of the dear ones in her far-off Indiana home, but she felt that this child's future depended, in a great measure, upon her—upon the counsel and the training which she could give it, and, feeling thus, her duty was clearly revealed to her; she must stay with Bessie's child.

She had loved this unfortunate, sinful sister very dearly. She understood how great had been the unsatisfied longings of her loving, passionate heart, the misery and despair that had been her doom. And while she daily wept tears of bitter sorrow for her hapless sister, she as often prayed that God would spare her child from a like fate.

And these prayers were answered, but in God's own way.

Toward Spring the scarlet fever broke out among the children of the neighborhood and little Ruth was one of the first to be taken with it.

All that human skill could do was done for the little sufferer. The village doctors were both employed. Lawrence was sent for, who also brought a physician from the city; but they held out no hope.

For a while Lawrence did not despair of saving her, and it was pitiful to see his stony grief when at last he realized, as he bent above the little cot on which his darling lay, that soon her bed must be made in the churchyard.

No need to worry over baby's future now. That little face was never to wear a look of despair, that innocent heart was to know no grief nor pain. God was to take her home to Heaven where sin nor shame nor sorrow could ever reach her.

These thoughts came to the heart of the wretched man. But oh, how could he give her up! How could he bear to see the coffin lid closed over that dear little face, shutting it out from his sight forevermore? And in a heartrending way he would beg the doctors to save her, as she was all he had to love.

Ruby sought to comfort him. "Have you forgotten that I love you, Lawrence?" she said to him one day as he was bewailing his wretched, lonely life, soon to be robbed of even his baby's love. "My love is all yours; it shall never fail you!"

"I know it, Ruby," he answered. "I could as soon doubt the mercy of Heaven as I could doubt your loyalty and truth; but if we are never to be more to each other than we are now, there is sadness even in the thought that your love is all mine. What can be more sad and depressing than a hopeless love? Ah, Ruby, dear little girl, my mind is heavily burdened, my heart is weighted down with woes that will, in time, crush out my very life. You cannot know the bitterness of it all, darling, you cannot understand!"

And Ruby, feeling that she was indeed powerless to comfort him in this bitter hour, crept away and spent the day in praying that God would, in some way, lighten his burden of woe, that baby's life might even yet be spared.

But there came a morning when they all knew that she was dying.

"Send for Bessie!" Lawrence exclaimed, as Addie entered the nursery where he was kneeling beside the dear little motionless form. "Send for her, Addie! This is her child as well as mine. Although she deserted her, I know that she loved her, and this is no time to remember wrong and sin. Send for the mother of my dying baby. But alas!" he added, as he wrung his hands in a despairing way, "before she could possibly reach this place, baby's little feet will be walking the golden streets of Heaven! Never again will she receive a look from baby's eyes; never again hear her name lisped by those sweet, precious lips. See how white and cold they are growing, Addie! They will never speak again. Oh, God of Heaven, have pity on her wretched mother!"

No; baby would never speak again. Addie realized this as she gazed on the little wax-like face; baby was already an angel. And linking her arm within Lawrence's, she drew him sobbing from the room.

He went to the library and threw himself face downward upon a couch. His heart-broken sobs ceased at length, but no word did he speak until Addie was about to leave him; then, raising his ghastly face, he gasped:

"Do as I told you, Addie; send for Bessie. I wish that I had sent before; but it was so hard to give up all hope. I could not believe that God would take away my baby! Why has He done it, I wonder? She is better off, I know. Her mother's disgrace can never harm her now; she will never know the sin and the shame of it. But, oh, it is so hard to give her up and lay her away forever! I have nothing to live for now. My life is empty—empty! But Bessie must know what has happened, she must not be denied the privilege of taking a last look at baby's face. It may be that her sinful heart will be changed when she learns that her child is an angel. Perhaps that is why God took her—to draw the mother's soul to Heaven. Send for her at once."

Addie wrote the message, the saddest one that ever was penned, she thought—"Baby is dead; come at once." It seemed to her that the heart of the poor mother must surely break when she read it.

But no answering message came to them. They delayed the funeral as long as possible, as Lawrence could not bear the thought of putting baby away forever until the mother had seen it in its little coffin bed. She must have gone from the place from which she had last written to Addie, but perhaps the message might find her. Thus they thought, and hoped until the last that she would come; but she did not. And one afternoon a weeping band followed the lost one across the threshold and laid her away where the flowers of spring would blossom above her little grave.

Very lonely and desolate seemed the house when, after the funeral, they returned to it.

Lawrence shut himself up in his own room and was seen no more that day. Nothing remained to him now of his married life but a memory. And what a memory! He sat down by the window and watched the changing clouds until the day was done and the stars, one by one, made their appearance in the beautiful evening sky. Somewhere far above those shining stars his baby was tonight, safe in the Saviour's arms. But the mother—where was she?

A bitter moan escaped his lips and again the tears fell from his eyes. Was she happy in her sinful life, or were the pangs of remorse already gnawing at her heart, filling her soul with misery, shame and woe? Baby in its purity and holy innocence was an angel in Heaven; the mother in sin and degradation was an outcast on earth. How widely they were divided! Would God's infinite pity ever bridge the gulf between them?

CHAPTER XXIII.

Four weeks had baby Ruth been sleeping in the churchyard when one morning, as Lawrence was looking over the letters which the postman had just brought, he was attracted by the handwriting in which one was addressed. He picked it up and scanned it closely. It was addressed to Ruby, but it surely was from Bessie; and with a trembling hand he handed it to her across the breakfast table.

Ruby's face wore a mystified look as she also, after gazing at it for a moment, came to understand whose hand had penned it; and turning to Addie she exclaimed:

"It is from Bessie! I wonder why she has written to me instead of you?"

Addie's mind was also filled with wonder, and she watched Ruby anxiously as she tore it open and began to devour its contents.

Slowly the color began to fade from Ruby's face; and as she read on and on, page after page, her face grew whiter and whiter, and those who watched her were prepared to hear something startling when she should at length speak to tell them the news the letter contained.

But not from those white, trembling lips were they to receive the soul-crushing news. She finished the letter, then turned to Lawrence and regarded him for a moment in dumb, frozen silence; then with a low, bitter moan she tried to rise, and a second later was lying in a senseless heap at Lawrence's feet.

Tenderly he lifted her in his arms and placed her upon a couch; and the anxiety with which their hearts were filled at seeing her lying so still and white, caused them to forget for a moment the letter.

At length the white lids slowly opened, and her eyes were turned first to Lawrence's face and then to Addie's. She tried to speak. "On baby's grave!" she gasped; she could say no more; again a shudder passed over her from head to foot, and, sinking back upon the silken cushions, she again lapsed into unconsciousness.

What had she meant by those wildly-spoken words? What terrible thing had she learned, the knowledge of which had paralyzed her senses and chilled the life-blood in her veins?

Mrs. Armytage was thoroughly alarmed now for her daughter's safety, and ordered that she be at once taken to her own room, where, when she again returned to consciousness, she would be alone with only her mother, and would not feel called upon to at once explain what it was that had affected her so terribly.

This being done, Lawrence's thoughts, as soon as it was made known to him that Ruby had somewhat recovered, returned to the letter; and going to the breakfast-room where it was still lying on the floor where she had dropped it, he picked it up, and after hastily running his eyes over the first page, he seated himself to read what it contained.

"Dear Ruby," it began, "I write to you because I fear that what I am about to say would kill my sister should the news come to her suddenly without a word of warning. You will know how to tell her, know how to prepare the dear girl for a bitter sorrow. I could not write to Lawrence. I loved him—love for him has been my doom. Had I loved him less I should not have grown despondent over his lack of love for me. He was kind and considerate always. He will grieve for me for a time, but in the end he will be happy; it is this which has nerved me for what I am about to do: for when this reaches you, Ruby, I shall have ceased to live; I shall have paid in full the penalty of my miserable folly and sin.

"I offer no excuse for deserting my husband and child. I feel that you understand it all; my life had simply become unbearable in its monotony and gloom. But it has been full enough of variety since then. Ah, yes! no pen can describe it in all its varied scenes of horror; scoffed at, sneered at, derided and scorned, and now forsaken!

"For a while Darrell was kind, but I soon enough learned that it was not for love of me that he had lured me away from my home, and one day he boldly confessed that to be revenged on Lawrence had been his only motive. He had never loved me, he said, and never would.

"This happened the day on which I was informed that Lawrence, in obtaining a divorce, had made me free to marry again if I chose to do so. He had promised to make me his wife as soon as he could do so legally, but now, with sneering, cutting words, he laughed me to scorn.

"What I suffered in that moment no tongue can tell. I thought of you, Ruby, and the words you spoke to me on the day of the picnic, when, with your dear face all aglow with earnestness, you begged of me to choose the right and warned me of the terrible consequences of the step I was about to take. The fate of which you warned me had overtaken me already: all my life I was to be an outcast; nothing could save me now!

"I did not weep and moan and beg of the false, heartless wretch to save me from further shame and disgrace; this I knew would be useless. With a mocking smile on his face he watched me as I writhed in misery at his cruel, heartless words; then when he at last knew that I had nothing to say to him, he coolly left the room.

"I have seen but very little of him since then. He has paid my bills and provided for me in every way, but we have lived apart. I had hoped to be his wife, loved and honored; he had destroyed this hope and with it he had killed what little love I had for him. I gave myself up to a bitter despair, and daily felt that I would gladly die and end it all.

"This feeling was strengthened when I received the telegram telling me that my baby was dead. Death would be a blessing to me now. Somewhere on the shore of eternity was my darling. Could I, myself, but cross the dark river of Death I might find her and with her find peace and rest.

"I was glad that she was dead, glad that she was never to know of her mother's shame and dishonor, but I could not summon courage to come and look at the little face cold and still in death. I remembered her as bright and joyous and full of life, and I knew that in Heaven her face was yet bright with happy smiles. I wished to think of her in this way only; I could not look at the little dead face. Besides, if I came I should have to face you all in my shame and despair, and I could never have done it.

"I cannot do it now. I am here in the village, at the Clarendon Hotel, but not until my eyes shall have closed forever shall you look upon my face. I cannot then see the look of mingled horror and sorrow which I know will be in the eyes of you all as you gaze upon me; I cannot then read your minds as they become filled with thoughts both bitter and tender of poor misguided Bescsie. For I know that a few tender thoughts will come and perhaps a little pity.

"In fancy I can see you, Ruby, as, with your great brown eyes all dimmed and blurred by tears, you bend above my lifeless form, and in fancy I can hear you say, 'Let us forgive her.' I know the goodness of your heart, Ruby—no one knows it better. You have been the best friend I ever had and I have loved you. Not with a calm, steady love, for there have been times in the past when I have felt that I hated you—hated you as my rival, the woman who stood between me and my husband's love, and more than once I have wished that you were dead. But your goodness and kindness would always make me realize how wicked I was and I would love you again in spite of myself. I love you now, and I hope that long years of happiness may yet be yours.

"Ask Addie to forgive me for all I have caused her to suffer. Leslie Darrell loved her. Of course, I did not know this when I left my home for him. I believed then that he loved only me; but he has confessed to me that he loved her devotedly. But it seems that his hatred of Lawrence and his desire to crush his heart with trouble was greater than his love. I have often thought how different life would have been for us all had it not been for the evil in this man's nature. Poor dear sister! She may be glad, for her own sake, that he deserted her; she could never have been happy with one so false and villainous. He has wronged us both; she will never forgive him, I know; but I ask you to beg of her to forgive me, her broken-hearted sister. I have written a long letter to the loved ones at home which will spare her the pain and the sorrow of breaking to them the news of my miserable life being ended.

"And Lawrence! A portrait of him lies before me as I write. I have gazed at it many times through bitter, blinding tears. I have kissed it over and over again, murmuring as I did so: 'My heart's best love, farewell!' Let it be buried with me, and make my grave close beside my baby's.

"Lawrence will grant this last request, I know. His noble, tender heart will be wrung with grief for a while over my sad and untimely end; but it is best that I should die. In dying I make it possible for you both to some day find the happiness of which you were defrauded when he was led to marry me. For you will be his wife now, Ruby; and perhaps some time in the years to come you will together visit my early grave, and with your hearts at last filled with love and joy, you will each be able to forgive me for the sorrow I have caused you both.

"Beside me stands a bottle labeled 'Poison.' My letter is finished. I shall seal and address it to you, and you, dear, faithful friend, will, when you receive it, know how to break the news to the others that poor Bessie is dead. For I shall be by that time I shall post this letter, then go to my baby's grave, take the fatal dose and lie down to sleep beside her. And I shall sleep well, for I am tired—oh, so tired! tired of wretchedness, tired of sin and tired of life!

"Tell Lawrence that my last thought was of him, and ask him, in simple pity, to breathe a prayer for the soul of her who loved him so well—poor weak, sinful, erring Bessie."

Without once raising his eyes from the paper, Lawrence Armytage read that pitiful, touching, tear-stained letter through to the bitter end. He had known much sorrow in his life, but never had his heart ached as it did now; never had he been so dazed and bewildered—so nearly paralyzed with woe.

He knew now what Ruby had meant when she had gasped those few mysterious words, "On baby's grave." It was there they would find the lifeless form of its mother, the girl who had once been his loving wife. There, with only the silent dead around her, she had died alone; there, with only the pitying stars to watch above her, she had lain throughout the whole long night.

It was an appalling thought, and for a while he felt powerless to move; and not until Addie entered the room did he recover his presence of mind enough to realize that something should be done at once, that the ghastly remains of the once brilliant Bessie Armytage should immediately be cared for, that he, himself, must see that this was done.

"What is it, Lawrence?" Addie asked, anxiously, as she held out her hand for the letter. "Have you read it? What terrible news does it contain?"

With trembling hands Lawrence folded the letter and placed it in his pocket.

"You cannot see it just yet, Addie; it is best that you should not read it now. You must prepare yourself for another crushing sorrow, for I have reason to believe that poor Bessie is dead. Do not question me," he added, in a voice choked with tears, as Addie was about to speak. "I cannot tell you about it now; it is too awful! Oh, God, forgive me," he wailed as he left the room, "if I have in any way been to blame for this!"

CHAPTER XXIV.

It seemed to Addie Vincent that the hours of that dreadful morning would never pass. She had seen Lawrence, after he had ordered the carriage brought to the door, enter it and drive rapidly toward the village. Ruby was still in her mother's room, and, being entirely alone, she could do nothing but wonder what it all meant, what terrible thing had happened or was about to happen. And it seemed to her [illegible] great was her wonder, anxiety and dread, that her heart-strings must snap under the awful strain.

But Ruby sent for her at last. She found her sitting by the window, pale as death and with her eyes red and swollen from weeping. Mrs. Armytage was still with her, and, as Addie entered the room, she advanced to meet her, kissed her tenderly, murmuring as she did so: "My dear child try to be brave and bear it calmly. Ruby will now tell you the sad news." Then she quietly withdrew and the two were left alone.

Slowly and tearfully, with her arms closely clasped around the trembling girl, she told her the awful story.

Addie listened in silence. Her face became white and haggard looking, her lips trembled pitifully, but no sound came from them; not even tears came to relieve the pent-up agony of her heart.

Was this awful thing true?

Several seconds passed while she gazed straight before her, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, and with her mind filled with this one awful thought—her sister was dead—dead by her own hand. And presently, dropping on her knees beside the dear friend who was weeping silent tears of sympathy and grief, she cried:

"Oh, Ruby, where is she now? What has been the fate of her dear, immortal soul?"

Ruby had a strong faith. She believed in God's infinite love, in his tender pity and merciful justice. And in an encouraging, hopeful way she now talked to the sadly bereaved girl, and sought to comfort her with the thought that God, knowing all the temptations and trials of the human heart, would judge accordingly.

And it was her strong, unbounded faith in God's goodness and mercy expressed in low, soothing tones that kept Lawrence's heart from actually sinking in despair, as they stood together that night around a flower-strewn coffin which had been brought to Elmwood, and which contained all that was mortal of the girl whom they had loved and who had caused them such bitter sorrow.

Two days later they buried her. The flowers which had been planted on the grave of baby Ruth were blooming in rich profusion, and a large wreath had been brought that morning and with loving hands twined about the tiny marble stone which marked her grave and on which was inscribed her beloved name.

Ah! what name would be carved on the stone that would one day be erected over the one into which they now lowered the poor mother, the erring and divorced wife?

This question was in the minds of all; and Lawrence, as he stood with bowed head and listened to the solemn words of the old clergyman as he commended the precious soul to God, imagined that Bessie's spirit was somewhere hovering near, and that in low, pitiful tones he could hear her begging for his pity and his pardon. And he felt that no matter what her sin had been, she had been terribly sinned against; and as a sense of his own shortcomings again came over him, he resolved that, although she had disgraced and dishonored his name, it should one day mark her grave as a token of his forgiveness

[illegible] woe, was [illegible] Bessie had returned alone, so Lawrence had learned in the village, and had stayed at the Clarendon Hotel before ending the life of which she had grown so tired. Where Darrell was, no one knew; and Addie Vincent, as she looked on the cold, dead form of her beloved sister, shuddered as she remembered the fascinating influence this man had once held over her, how her own heart had once thrilled at his caresses, and pitied the dear one who had, under that same influence, fallen into sin; and in pitying she forgave that sin.

After the funeral she began to make preparations for returning to her Western home.

Lawrence had, after the baby's death, told her that if she would stay through the summer with them, that he would in the autumn accompany her on her long journey, as he would have to go West then in the interest of the law firm by which he was employed. But Addie's heart now yearned for the love and sympathy of her own loved ones, so she decided to go at once; and Lawrence, after thinking the matter over, decided that he, too, would go at this time.

He was sadly depressed, and he felt that he needed some engrossing business with which to employ his mind in order to overcome and to in a measure forget the sorrows and the horrors of the last few weeks.

As the hour of their departure drew near, Lawrence sought to have a few minutes' conversation with Ruby alone. He had, since Bessie's death, seemed to avoid her as much as possible. But Ruby felt that she understood what was in his heart, and was not surprised that he had decided to go away for a while.

He folded her in his arms now and kissed her tenderly, but there was such an air of sadness in his manner that Ruby could not keep back her tears, and she wept bitterly.

Lawrence held her in his arms, but he said nothing until her weeping had ceased. Then he said:

"I think that we understand each other, darling. I know that you will love and pray for me while I am away, and you know that I will return to you as soon as I have gotten over the awful horror of it all. Ah! little girl, I trust that happiness is to come to us some time in the future, but just now that newly-made grave overshadows even the thought of it. Bear with me, Ruby; forgive my seeming coldness; forgive and pity me."

"I understand you, Lawrence. I but honor you the more for your grief over poor Bessie's fate. I do not ask you to [illegible] her, Lawrence. I would not have you do so. Within your great, generous heart there must be room for a tender memory of her side by side with your love for [illegible]. Forgive her, Lawrence; her sin was [illegible], but she suffered much [illegible]

"[illegible] dear Ruby!" and he kissed the [illegible] face so beautiful in its enthusiasm [illegible] of mercy always. God bless [illegible] all that you were to Bessie!"

Addie Vincent, too, as she bade good-by, blessed her over and over for her goodness and kindness to the dear ones sleeping so quietly beneath the flowers in the village churchyard.

"I shall never forget you," she said. "[illegible] some time I shall come to visit those quiet [illegible], and I shall be glad if I then see the joy and happiness you so much deserve shining from your eyes."

Ruby accompanied them to the station, and Lawrence's face, as he waved her a last good-by, lived in her memory for many a day. A mingling of sorrow and pain and hope were written there, and she fondly believed that the hopeful look would be there when he returned, and that the lines of sorrow and pain would be worn away.

But he, as the train moved swiftly from the station, felt a bitter sense of loneliness come over him as he thought of the living and the dead he was leaving behind. He could hardly tell of which he thought the more—Bessie who had loved him so wildly and hopelessly and who had brought disgrace upon him, and then, in the end, died to atone for it all, or Ruby whose love had been as hopeless, but who had, even in the most bitter hour, been steadfast and true.

Then he remembered the words Bessie had spoken when, the bride of but a few days, she had learned that his old sweetheart had not been false to him, that she was not married, and that it was now useless to hope that he would ever care for her.

"I love you well enough to wish to live my life with you even now," she had said. "Such love as mine is the love that makes of men and women devils or angels; how it will end with me I do not know."

Poor unfortunate child! It had had a terrible ending! And again Lawrence prayed for the reckless soul that had, all unsummoned, gone forth to meet its Judge.

CHAPTER XXV.

A year went by, and still Lawrence Armytage was traveling in the West. He thought lovingly and often of the dear, patient face that was watching for his return, and he told himself that when the snows of winter were again lying white and deep over Bessie's grave, then he would go and claim for his bride the dear one who had loved him so long.

It was Christmas eve when he came. No one could look at Lawrence Armytage without seeing that he had suffered acutely. But the anguish of his pain was over now, and as he once again folded within his arms the dear girl who had been his heart's only love, he experienced a sense of the old-time joy and gladness.

The next day there was a quiet wedding within the walls of dear old Elmwood. Reuben Armytage had spoken of a church wedding, but Ruby could not think of such [illegible]. She remembered the heart-rending funeral service that had once been held within the old church where they worshiped, and the flower-strewn casket that had stood within the altar rail, and shuddered. Not there could she become the wife of Lawrence Armytage; neither did she wish for any great display. Once she had dreamed of a wedding in the springtime when the earth was bright with flowers, a wedding heralded by sweetest music and ringing bells; she shrank from all this now; their sorrows had been too deep.

But very lovely she looked in her bridal ribes of white satin and lace, and her father, as the words were spoken which at last made these two man and wife, could not keep the tears from falling as again a sense of his mistakes and follies came over him. Ah! how much misery would have been spared had those two been united years ago!

Addie Vincent had been invited to the wedding, but she did not come. She sent a letter, however, full of loving thoughts and well wishes for them both.

She also told them that Leslie Darrell had, but a few days before, been to see her, and had pleaded earnestly for her forgiveness. "He has aged terribly," she wrote; "his hair is streaked with silver and his face bears the marks of sorrow and remorse. He has suffered, I know, and his mind will ever be haunted by a memory of his guilty sins. He owned that he felt himself to be the murderer of poor Bessie. He was very humble, and listened to my words of contempt with a white face and quivering lips, and when he at last went from my presence I think that he realized that there was no further hope of happiness for him in this world. For, although he realized that his sins were deep and dark and terrible, he seemed to have clung to a hope that his love for me expressed in his glowing, earnest way, might rekindle within my heart a little of the love which I had once felt for him, and that I might yet, after I had outlived the horror of Bessie's death, forgive him and be his wife.

"But I actually shrank from his words of [illegible] and I could not bring myself to even [illegible] hand at parting. I loved him once, and even now I love what he might have been. But my sister's grave lies between us; I can never forget this, and I told him so. I also told him that some time in the years to come I might find it in my heart to forgive him, but that I should never forget, that I should never get over the awful horror of it all, and that we must never meet again.

"His sad face haunts me; it always will. I shall pray for the poor despairing soul, pray that God will lead him to a true repentance and pardon his many sins. For I can never forget that I loved him once, and I often wonder if, in Heaven, we shall meet some day with all these tragic sins and sorrows forgiven and forgotten, and will the old love live again with all its old-time sweetness.

"I am glad, my dear friends, that you two are to be happy at last. I wish you a long life crowned with many blessings, and would be with you on your wedding day were it not for the fact that my heart is still too heavy for me to enjoy a festive occasion; however, I mean to visit you [illegible]."

And she did. Three years later a great festivity took place at Elmwood—the christening of the little heir, whom his parents had named Reuben. And Addie Vincent was there.

Although her face was as sweet and beautiful as ever, she had never recovered the gay spirits of former days. No new love had come into her life. "I shall never marry," she told Ruby. "I can never love again as I loved Leslie Darrell, base and unworthy though he was, and I shall give to no man a heart seamed and scarred by a love like that."

An air of sadness seemed to have settled upon her; and although she laughed and talked in a pleasant way with the many friends who had assembled at Elmwood on this joyous occasion, she remembered the beautiful, brilliant sister who had once reigned as mistress of this grand old home, and her eyes grew dim as they turned involuntarily toward the old churchyard where the dear face had long since mouldered into dust.

And Reuben Armytage, who was watching her, as he saw the expression of pain steal over her face felt that he knew of what she was thinking; and from his own heart arose a heavy sigh as he again told himself that the miserable mistakes of his life had been the cause of all the sorrow that had ever visited Elmwood. And he shuddered as he realized to the fullest extent what those mistakes had done; they had broken friendships, broken homes, broken hearts and dug a dishonored grave.

The End.

GOT IT

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"One day a friend called at my home—that was a year ago. I spoke about how well she was looking and she said:

"'Yes, and I feel well, too. It's because I am drinking Postum in place of ordinary coffee.'

"I said, 'What is Postum?'

"Then she told me how it was a food-drink and how much better she felt since using it in place of coffee or tea, so I sent to the store and bought a package and when it was made according to directions it was so good I have never bought a pound of coffee since. I began to improve [illegible]

"I cannot begin to tell you how much better I feel since using Postum and leaving coffee alone. My health is better than it has been for years and I cannot say enough in praise of this delicious food drink." Name given by Postum Co., Battle [illegible]

[illegible] away the destroyer and put a rebuilder to work and Nature will do the rest. [illegible]'s what you do when Postum takes [illegible] in your diet. "There's a [illegible] The Road to Well-[illegible]

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BOYS AND GIRLS CORNER

The Adventures of Tom Dayton;

OR

The Mystery of Dark Hollow.

By Will Lisenbee.

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Begun in No. 31, July 30. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER VII.

For a moment Tom stood motionless. It had all happened so suddenly that he was taken completely by surprise. He looked into the barrel of the pistol and instinctively his hands went up. Ora, who had already obeyed the command of the robber, was standing with hands elevated and trembling with fear.

"You can't git away from me now," chuckled the tramp, keeping the pistol leveled at Tom, and at the same time using the free hand to take Ora's watch and pocketbook.

It was evident that he looked on Tom as the only one of the two who might give him trouble, and so kept him covered with the pistol.

For a moment Tom's heart sank. He thought of the money given him by Mr. Larkin. Must he lose that? The thought caused him to think rapidly. Suddenly a light leaped into his eyes.

Then he did an amazing thing. Something that took the breath from Ora and caused him to stand gasping with utter amazement.

What Tom did was to leap forward with the agility of a cat. Like a flash his sinuous body cleaved the space separating him from the robber. Then his right arm shot out as he dealt the tramp a stunning blow, and at the same instant he brought into play his marvelous skill—that which had won more than one hard-fought battle on the gridiron, and which he had used to defeat the bully at the berry sheds the day before—and in the twinkling of an eye the tramp went down as if he had been shot. As he fell he dropped the pistol and the watch and pocketbook he had taken from Ora.

Quick as a flash Tom seized the pistol and leveled it at the robber, who was now making an effort to pull himself together.

"Throw up your hands if you value your life!" commanded Tom.

The tramp struggled to his feet, elevating his hands as he did so, but there was an evil look on his face.

"We shall see that you don't trouble the traveling public again soon," remarked Tom. "I am going to turn you over to the officers of the law."

As Tom spoke he glanced behind him to see if the stage coach was near, and as he did so there was a crash in the brush by the roadside. The tramp had leaped down a steep descent into a ravine, and the next instant had darted into a thick clump of bushes.

"Don't let us follow him," cried Ora, who had now found his voice. "He's a desperate fellow and there is no telling what he'd do if crowded."

"I guess we couldn't do much good by following him unless we had help," remarked Tom, "but I'm awfully sorry to let him escape."

"You might have been killed when you attacked the robber while he had the drop on us with the pistol," exclaimed Ora. "Gee whillikers! I wouldn't have done what you did for the world. Say, Tom—I am going to call you by your given name if you'll let me—you are the bravest boy I ever saw!"

"What makes you think so?" queried Tom.

"Because you attacked that fellow when he had a pistol leveled at your head."

Tom threw back his head and laughed.

"It wasn't loaded," he said.

"Great Scott! That's right, and I had forgotten all about it."

"I noticed it when I examined the pistol," replied Tom. "I guess the robber had an idea that something was wrong with it and took the chance of running away. You noticed that he snapped it at me when I leaped for him, didn't you?"

"I—I notice anything? Why, I wouldn't have seen a white elephant if it had crossed the road before my very eyes!"

"Well, he depended on the pistol, and that is how I came to get the advantage of him."

"It was a mighty nervy thing to do, anyway," insisted Ora. "I would not have dared tackle a burly fellow like that. Gee whiz! The way you bowled him over was a caution!"

By this time the stage came up, and the driver, who had seen nothing of what occurred, was greatly amazed when he learned that a robber had attacked the boys.

He listened to Ora's recital of the incident with deep interest, and cast admiring glances at Tom as the narrator dilated on his friend's daring act.

"It is a pity we couldn't have captured the fellow," he said, "but you boys did wonderfully well as it is. I venture to say that there are few men who would have done as well. He didn't get away with any of your valuables, did he?"

"I think not," replied Tom, glancing questioningly at Ora.

"Oh, he had my pocketbook and watch all right, but he let them drop quick enough when he got knocked down," Ora said.

"That is the second brush I have had with that fellow," remarked Tom.

The stage driver and Ora both looked surprised.

"I recognized him the moment I got a good look at him," Tom went on, and he proceeded to tell the story of the tramp's attempt to rob the farmer.

"I guess he'll keep clear of you in the future," smiled Ora.

"I hope so," responded Tom. "I might not be so fortunate next time."

The boys climbed into the coach and they proceeded on their way.

A couple of miles farther on they stopped at a stage station for dinner. Here a pouch of mail was put off and the horses watered and fed, for the place was an inn, postoffice and country store combined.

The innkeeper listened to the story of the attempted robbery of the boys with a grave face.

"I must notify the sheriff," he said. "It is dangerous to have such characters at large."

"I don't think the fellow is very dangerous," remarked Tom. "He appears to be just a common vagabond tramp. If he were a professional robber he would be armed."

"I guess you are right," nodded the innkeeper. "But we should all be safer by having such characters in jail."

When they had eaten dinner, Ora insisted on paying the bill for the three.

"I guess I can afford it," he laughed, "since I was so lucky as to have some one with me to get my pocketbook away from the robber. I should like to have you with me when I travel in the future," he added, turning to Tom. "You seem to be pretty handy with robbers."

"I haven't struck any of the genuine article yet," Tom replied, "which accounts for my success."

It was nearly sunset when they arrived at Mason's Springs, where they were to stop for the night.

The day's journey had been a weary one, and both the boys slept soundly till they were called to breakfast the next morning. Another stage was to carry them to Rockville, the one they had come in returning to Tipton.

From Mason's Springs to Rockville the road was fine, and they arrived at their destination about 4 o'clock in the evening.

"Of course you will not go out to your uncle's today," Ora said to Tom, as they drove into the town. "You must come home with me and spend the night and tomorrow I'll drive you out to your uncle's place."

Tom was grateful enough for the invitation and readily accepted it.

Rockville was a small town of not more than six hundred inhabitants, but seemed to be a good trading point.

The general merchandise store kept by Ora's father was the most important establishment in the town.

As the stage drew up in front of the store Ora said

"We will get out here and stop in and see my father for a few minutes before we go to the house."

They got out and Ora took out his own traps and Tom's valise and placed them in a delivery wagon that stood in front of the store and said to the boy in charge: "Take these traps up to the house and tell mother I am bringing a visitor home with me."

As they entered the store Tom noticed that half a dozen clerks were employed in the establishment and that quite a number of customers were present.

Mr. Mansfield was in his office. He was a man of fifty or thereabouts, with a pleasant face.

When Ora had greeted his father he introduced Tom, giving a glowing account of the adventure with the robber, not failing to dwell on the part Tom had played in the affair.

The merchant shook Tom's hand warmly.

"You are a plucky boy," he said. "I am glad to make your acquaintance. I hope you and Ora will be the best of friends."

"Thank you; I am sure we shall," answered Tom.

"Shall you stop long in the town?" asked the merchant.

"For a week or two, anyway," Tom said.

Have you relatives here?"

"I have an uncle living in the country near here, whom I expect to visit."

"Then I hope you will let us see you often. Of course you must come home with Ora till you are ready to go out to see your kinsman."

"I am very grateful for your kindness, and shall be pleased to do so," Tom replied.

After conversing with the merchant for a few minutes, Tom went with Ora to the latter's house, which was a rather large story and a half structure, with wide porches and surrounded by a well-shaded lawn.

Mrs. Mansfield was a kindly-faced woman, and she received Tom quite as cordially as the merchant had done.

Ora lost no time in acquainting his mother with the startling incidents of his homecoming journey, and it was plain to be observed that she looked on Tom as a hero.

"I am glad to know you," she said to Tom, "and pleased to have Ora make your acquaintance."

And then she asked Tom many questions about himself, and seemed to manifest a great interest in his welfare.

They were still talking when supper was announced, and they were joined by Mr. Mansfield who had come from the store.

Ora was an only child, and the parents were very fond of him, and it was easy to see that they indulged him in everything.

That night as Tom lay on his bed the incidents of the past few days came back to him. He had already met with some exciting adventures since leaving Millville. There might be still more in store for him, he thought, for he had come to Rockville on a strange errand.

CHAPTER VIII.

The next morning Ora drove Tom out to Dark Hollow, which was the name that had been given to the place owned by Dick Henderson.

It was situated in a basin between two hills, some two miles from the town. It was a wide, rambling old building, weather-beaten and forbidding in its appearance.

A thick grove of trees surrounded the building, casting a deep shade over the neglected yard. The garden was overgrown with noxious weeds, and everywhere there were evidences of neglect and decay.

The gate was broken and hung on a single rusty hinge, and there was a smell of rank vegetation in the air.

As the boys passed through the gate and walked up the weed-grown path, they saw no evidence of life about the place.

"I shouldn't fancy living in such a place," thought Tom, as he let his gaze wander over the gloomy building and neglected yard.

As they came round a wing of the house they saw an old negro sitting on the porch in the sun. He was evidently half asleep when the boys came up, for he roused himself with a start when Tom spoke to him.

"Is Mr. Henderson at home?" Tom asked.

The old darkey blinked at the two visitors stupidly for a moment before speaking.

"Massa Dick he don' see nobody," he said at length.

"Is he at home?" repeated Tom.

"Yes, sah."

"Tell him I want to see him," said Tom.

"He hain't woked up yit, sah," answered the darkey. "Bettah go way, sah. Massa Dick don' low no visitahs, sah."

"I will wait till he wakes us," said Tom. "Then you may tell him that his nephew is here to see him."

The negro scratched his head and stared at the speaker in stupid perplexity.

"You his kinfolks?" he said, shaking his head slowly. "Massa Dick he hab no kinfolks. Dey all dead long ago, sah."

"I guess I can soon convince him that I am alive," smiled Tom. "When will he be awake?"

"I don' know, sah."

"Well, I'll wait, anyway," said Tom.

The boys strolled about the premises, leaving the darkey sitting nodding on the porch

"Shall I wait for you?" asked Ora.

"Maybe it is not worth while," Tom replied. "I shall spend the day here, anyway. I am going to find out what manner of man my uncle is before I go away."

"Then shall I drive back for you this evening?"

"Thank you, but you need not take the trouble. I may remain here longer than I think, and if I should want to return to town it is not so far that I cannot walk. If I should not return by tomorrow afternoon I'd be glad to have you drive out and bring my grip, if you will."

"I shall be glad to do so," said Ora. "I shall probably drive out this way anyhow tomorrow evening to see how you are getting on, if you don't show up before then."

Tom sat down on a bench under a tree, and as he watched Ora drive away an overpowering sense of loneliness came over him. He looked about him and was depressed by the desolation of the place. There was something grim and ghostlike in the gray, weather-beaten structure that even the bright sun of summer could not banish.

He almost wished he had returned to town with Ora. He felt sure that he should never be content to stay long in such a place.

He got up and strolled across the grounds. Back of the house a fence, half rotted down, ran along the edge of a deep ravine. Tom approached the edge and looked over. It was full fifty feet deep, and the sound of running water came from the depths below.

"I cannot understand why my uncle should live in such a place as this," he reflected. "He doesn't cultivate the land, and everything is going to ruin."

He walked back to the porch where the darkey was sitting.

"How long have you lived with Mr. Henderson?" Tom asked.

"I don't know, sah."

"You don't know?"

"No, sah. A good long spell, I 'specs."

"Do you think Mr. Henderson is awake yet?"

"I'll see, sah."

The darkey got up and entered the house. In a few moments he returned, saying that his master was not yet awake.

Tom walked out to the gate, feeling that he might as well have gone back to town with Ora.

As he stood leaning on the fence looking down the road he heard steps and saw an old man passing along the dim road carrying fishing tackle.

"Howdy," greeted the stranger, seating himself on a stump and looking inquiringly at Tom.

"A fine morning," Tom remarked, returning the greeting.

"Going to be a fine day to fish," replied the stranger. "Do you live here?"

"No, sir. I just came out from town on a visit."

"Friend of Henderson's?"

"His nephew," replied Tom.

"I didn't know he had a relative on earth."

"You are acquainted with my uncle, then?"

The old man laughed

"I guess there isn't anybody that knows Dick Henderson," he said, with a shake of the head. "He doesn't seem to want to know anybody."

"I don't know much about him myself," said Tom, "as I never saw him."

"Isn't he at home?"

"Yes, but the old darkey tells me that he isn't up yet."

"I wouldn't think a boy of your age would like staying here."

"I don't expect I shall. How long has my uncle lived here?"

"He bought this place about six years ago, but he has been away most of the time. When he's here he never has any visitors, and he hardly ever goes away from the place. He has been gone for nearly a year, and just got back a week or so ago. That is, I suppose he has, as I have seen some one I took for him in the yard."

"Does the old darkey stay here while my uncle is away?"

"I think so. At least I have never known the negro to leave the place."

"I wonder why my uncle keeps him. He don't seem to have done any work about the place. Everything is going to rack."

"So it is. It is strange why any one should want to live here. Your uncle is a queer fellow."

"That is what most people seem to think," said Tom.

He stood talking with the stranger for some minutes, and when he returned to the house the negro informed him that his uncle was awake.

Tom was shown through a hallway into a room in the east wing of the building.

As he entered the room he saw a man of some fifty years sitting in an easy chair by the window. His features were covered by a thick beard streaked with gray, and his eyes were small and piercing. His nose was prominent with a slight semitic curve and his lips thin and colorless, and there was something about him that repelled rather than attracted the visitor.

Tom walked across the room to where he sat and held out his hand

"I am Tom Dayton, your nephew," he said.

CHAPTER IX.

The penetrating gaze of the man swept over Tom. Then he took the boy's extended hand.

"So you are my nephew?" he said. "I am glad you came. Take that chair there and tell me all about yourself."

"Thank you," responded Tom, seating himself. "I was afraid you might not be pleased with my visit, but you are now the only living relative I have."

"Then your father is dead?"

"Yes, sir. He died two weeks ago."

"He left you well provided for, I suppose."

"He left me nothing," replied Tom.

"That is bad. You will have to work for your living, then?"

"Yes, sir."

"I hope you do not expect me to keep you?"

"No, sir. I shall make my own way."

"I am glad to see that you are a boy of some spirit. I am a poor man, and it is all I can do to provide for my own wants."

"I do not intend to ask any help from you," remarked Tom. "I am strong and willing to work."

"I am glad to hear you say that. The boy who depends on some one else is usually a failure in life. I always understood that your father was well off. How does it happen that he left nothing?"

"It was through bad investments."

"So I supposed. He was not a very prudent man in some things. He should have provided for his old age by being more careful how he invested his money, but now that he is gone the hardship must fall on his own child. If I were a rich man I should help you, but I am poor—very poor—and no longer able to work. The rheumatism is coming back on me and I can hardly get from one room an another without help. Where are you making your home now?"

"I have no home, but shall stay in Rockville for a while."

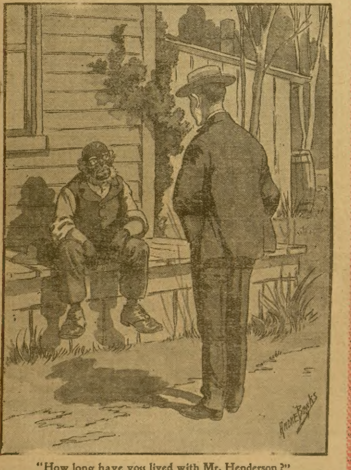
"You expect to get employment there, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir; I shall try to, at least."

"Have you any money?"

"I have enough to keep me, probably, till I can get work."

"I am glad to hear it. I should be sorry



"How long have you lived with Mr. Henderson?"

to see you in want and not be able to help you."

"I am grateful for your interest, but I shall be able to make my own way."

"What kind of work do you expect to do?"

"Any kind that I can get."

"You might get a position as clerk in some store. Have you ever clerked any?"

"No, sir; I have done very little work of any kind, as I have spent a great deal of my time in school."

"Do you understand bookkeeping?"

"Yes, sir; I took a course in the Millville academy."

"You might find a position as bookkeeper if you should go to the city."

"I have thought of that, but I understand that the cities are crowded with the unemployed already, and I thought it best to wait till I had something to live on for a while before venturing to leave the country."

"That is a wise decision. The city is not always the best place for a boy. I have lived in the city, but I prefer the country. Most boys who have been raised on a farm think it a fine thing to go to the city to live, but there are not many of them think so after they have tried it; that is, if they are poor boys and have to make their own way. I would be glad if I could provide for you, but I am too poor. But you can make your home here till something better turns up—till you have time to look around a little."

"Oh, don't trouble yourself on my account," said Tom. "I didn't come here with any intention of being a burden on you."

"I know it," was the reply, "and I respect you for your independence. But there is not pressing need of your going away. Better stay here a while and look around till you strike something. Of course you can go and come as you please, but make this your home. I shall want to talk with you further by and by. In fact, it is possible I may have something for you to do—something in which you can do me a great favor."

"In that case I shall be glad to stay," replied Tom. "I have a little business to look after in town, but this will not require all my time."

"Very well. I'll have Zeke show you your room, and you can make yourself at home."

He called to the negro, who appeared immediately.

"You can show my nephew to the north room upstairs, and put it in order for him," he said. "Then you can bring my breakfast. You have breakfasted, I suppose," he added, turning to Tom, "but won't you have a cup of coffee with me?"

"Thanks, I should not care for any," Tom replied. "I think I shall take a walk about the place after I have been shown my room."

He followed the negro up a flight of stairs and into a comfortably-furnished room. There was a clean bed, some chairs, a bureau, a table and an ancient brass lamp. The window was up so as to admit the cool breeze, and Tom thought the room very cozy and comfortable.

"You needn't take the trouble to straighten up the room till you have taken my uncle his breakfast," he said to Zeke. "There is plenty of time to do that. I shall go out for a walk presently."

"Yes, sah," bowed the negro, and he then withdrew.

Tom pulled a chair up to the open window and sat down. He did not know what to make of his uncle. At first he was under the impression that he should not like him, but after having talked to him he was willing to admit that his first impressions might have been the result of prejudice.

"He has treated me very kindly so far," Tom thought, "and seemed disposed to take an interest in my welfare. He speaks as if he is very poor. I don't want to sponge on him if he is. But—I wonder if he really is as poor as he pretends?"

This was a question that he could not settle in his mind. Dick Henderson was a recluse—a hermit, almost—and might be a miser. No one seemed to know anything about him or his business. He was a puzzle to the people of the neighborhood, and Tom was not surprised that he did not understand him.

"I suppose I shall understand him better when I have seen more of him," Tom thought.

He went down and strolled about the grounds. He followed a path through the garden. It was overgrown with weeds save at one end where a few vegetables were cultivated. Beyond the garden was another enclosure containing some chicken houses which were in a tumbled-down condition. A few fowls here and there gave the place a faint semblance of habitation.

Tom passed through the garden and followed a winding path that led down a slope toward a creek.

The place was wild and picturesque. The shade was so deep that there was a sort of twilight in the depths of the ravine.

It seemed cool and inviting, and there was a charm about the aspect of primitive wildness that attracted Tom.

A dim path zigzagged down the steep, rocky slope, and following this, he came to a brawling brook that raced through a rocky channel. He turned his steps along the bank, pushing his way through the grass.

As he turned a sharp angle in the path his foot struck something lying at his feet, half concealed in the high grass. He glanced downward and as he did so a human hand reached up and seized him in a grip of iron.

The reader will find in next week's issue of the Ledger further chapters of this thrilling story. Cameras and patterns are still being given free to subscribers. See pages thirteen and fifteen.

YOU AND I.

If we could leave this world behind—
  Its gain and loss, its praise and blame,
Nor seeking place, nor fearing shame,
  Some fair land quite forgotten find,
We might be happy, you and I,
  And let this foolish world go by.

No paradise of love and bliss,
  No dreams of youth in Eden bowers,
But some dear home of quiet hours,
  Where all of life we would not miss,
But find some day sweet ere we die,
  And let this cruel world go by.

It will not be—we are too weak
  To snatch from Time and Life one day;
But, when they both have passed away,
  O Love! we will each other seek
Where none can part us, none deny
  This world and all its woes gone by.

A Remarkable Man.

"Who is that distinguished-looking individual whom everybody seems to regard with so much awe?" asked the stranger.

"Who? That man with the Prince Albert coat and the high hat?"

"Yes."

"That's the most remarkable orator ever known. He has made Fourth of July orations for ten years and never once has he said that this is a government of the people, by the people and for the people."

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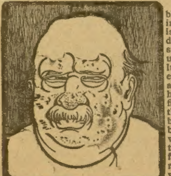

Puffs under the eyes; red nose; pimple-blotched, greasy face don't mean hard drinking always as much as it shows that there is BILE IN THE BLOOD. It is true, drinking and over-eating overloads the stomach, but failure to assist nature in regularly disposing of the partially digested lumps of food that are dumped into the bowels and allowed to rot there, is what causes all the trouble. Cascarets will help nature help you, and will keep the system from filling with poisons, and clean out the sores that tell of the system's rottenness. Bloated by bile the figure becomes unshapely, the breath foul, eyes and skin yellow; in fact the whole body kind of fills up with filth. Every time you neglect to help nature you lay the foundation for just such troubles. Cascarets will carry the poisons out of the system without gripe or pain. Start to-night—one tablet—keep it up for a week and help the liver clean up the bowels, and you will feel right, your blood will be rich, face look clean, eyes bright. Get a 50c box of Cascarets, take as directed. If you are not satisfied you get your money back. Be sure and get what you ask for—Cascarets. Sample and booklet free. Address Sterling Remedy Co., Chicago or New York. 486

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Daughter of Ruth--and Eve

BY JOHN R. GRAHAM.

The annual entertainments of the Daughters of Ruth and the Band of Hope were given in aid of treasuries sadly in need of a financial tonic.

The two societies had originally been one united sisterhood, but dissension had done its work when one faction had clamored for the election of Nettie Fredericks as president, while a second division desired a third term for Mrs. Ida Grumbacher.

Mrs. Grumbacher, fat and placid, had been duly returned to the chair for a third term, by virtue of her lavishness as an entertainer, and thereupon the Fredericks party had established the Daughters of Ruth to glean from the fields of humanity those whom the demon rum had claimed for its own.

In point of fact, neither society was more than a social organization, for there were few drunkards in Truscott, and it is to nobody's discredit that these few were not reformed, since none of them ever came to the public meetings to discover that alcohol, according to brilliantly lithographed charts, gave to the human stomach the hectic flush of a congested digestive apparatus, and to share with the "Banders" or the "Daughters" the little cakes and lemonade served after all the meetings.

The cakes were baked by the members, but the lemonade cost money, and it was to provide money for this that the rival societies held an entertainment each year. This year the chances were in favor of the Banders, who had secured the services of Jack Schollard as their stage director.

This was all the more an insult to the Daughters, since Jack had been paying assiduous court to Nettie Fredericks for several years, and the Daughters even went so far as to accuse Mrs. Brumbacher of breaking up the engagement to secure his services for her entertainment.

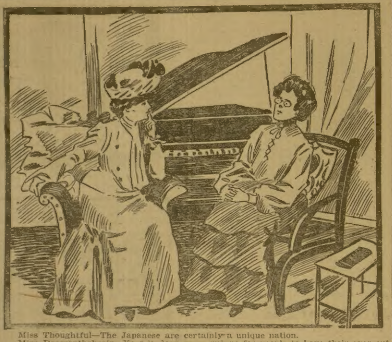
Schollard was the man who always got up the Christmas entertainments for the various churches, donating his services impartially to all alike. To do Mrs. Grumbacher justice, that portly dame had not been concerned with the breaking of the engagement.

She had met Jack in the postoffice the morning after he and Nettie had had a tiff, and, smarting under the injustice of Nettie's assertion that he was unduly attentive to Grace Vaughn, he had readily assented to Mrs. Grumbacher's request that he direct the cantata and rehearse the various recitations that went to make up her program, thereby widening the breach between himself and Nettie, it seemed, irrevocably.

The feud between the Daughters and the Banders hal already given the gossips of both sexes more than one delicious half hour; now they quietly enjoyed the battle between the two societies over Schollard.

The Daughters alternately stormed and pleaded, but to no effect. Jack assured them that he would be very glad to help them get up their entertainment if properly requested by the president, and Nettie, with tear-stained eyes, vigorously declared that she would see the Daughters go down to ignominious failure rather than speak to that horrid man again.

The more the other Daughters pleaded the more determined she became, and the more triumphant was the expression upon Mrs. Grumbacher's face.



Miss Thoughtful—The Japanese are certainly a unique nation.

Miss Dressonthebrain—Yes? it does seem unique for people to have their eyes cut bias.

On the day when the Truscott Trumpet announced that Jack had secured from New York the very latest songs, the leader of the Banders grew positively expansive, and announced that she had decided to dispense with the cantata and present instead a minstrel performance, in which the minstrels should all be members of the society.

Seven daughters were hastily admitted to the band because of their desire to participate in the novel performance, and Mr. Schollard sent to the city for burnt cork just like that the real minstrels use.

At this announcement the Daughters, who had been feebly struggling with "The Queen of the Roses," sat down and wept until the determination of their president wavered almost to the point of capitulation—but not quite.

The final straw was applied by no less a personage than Mrs. Grumbacher herself, who, meeting Nettie in Green's Emporium the evening of the Band entertainment (which was three weeks in advance of that of the Daughters), patronizingly asked if Nettie would be present that evening.

Receiving an answer in the negative, she continued patronizingly: "My dear, you can't afford to miss it. It will be an absolute novelty, and you might pick up some good ideas for your own entertainment."

Then she swept out of the store, leaving Nettie white with rage, for the store was filled with Banders and Daughters alike.

Truscott had never had a woman minstrel show before. It was bad enough that this honor should fall to the Banders, but that she should be so patronizingly told that she might profit by witnessing the performance was too much.

Jack Schollard was coming down the other side of the street, and all Main street gasped to see her cross and halt him.

She came straight to the point.

"Jack," she said with a bewitching smile, "I am sorry I was so cross the other evening. Will you make up?"

"Will I?" His face grew radiant. "Why, my darling—"

She held up a detaining hand. "Come up to the house this evening," she said, 'and bring the ring."

"But," he stammered, "tonight is the Band of Hope entertainment."

"I know it," she said coldly, "be there by 7 o'clock if you are coming," and she had passed on before the astonished man could collect his wits.

The following paragraphs are from the Truscott "Trumpet":

"The Band of Hope entertainment, which was to have been given at the town hall Thursday, has been postponed because it was found impossible for the minstrels to blacken their faces on account of the unavoidable absence of John Schollard, who was to show them how. Nellie Jackson tried it and got her eyes full of burnt cork.

"The entertainment wil positively be given two weeks from Thursday, when the Daughters of Ruth will take part, the two societies having decided to reunite. At a special meeting of the reunited societies last Friday Miss Nettie Fredericks was elected president in place of Mrs. Ida Grumbacher, who resigned.

"We hear that Jack Schollard and Nettie Fredericks are to be married next month. Congratulations, Jack."

Atlantic Cable Guesses.

When it was first proposed to lay a marine cable many intelligent people said it would not sink to the bottom, but would remain suspended at a certain depth because of the density of the water due to pressure from above. Of course the pressure increases with the depth on all sides of the cable in its descent through the sea, but as practically everything on earth is more compressible than water it is obvious that the iron wire, yarn, gutta-percha and copper conductor forming the cable must be more and more compressed as they descend. Thus the cable constantly increases in density, or specific gravity, in going down, while the equal bulk of water surrounding it continues to have, practically speaking, very nearly the same specific gravity as at the surface. Without this valuable property of water the hydraulic press would not exist.

Some of the most distinguished naval men have made the blunder that is mentioned above. Even at a comparatively recent period Captain Marryat of the British navy, the celebrated nautical author, wrote in one of his novels: "What a mine of wealth must lie buried in the sands! What riches lie entangled among its rocks or remain suspended in the unfathomable gulf, where the compressed fluid is equal in gravity to that which it encircles!"

When the first Atlantic cable was about to be laid, to obviate this supposed difficulty it was gravely proposed to festoon the cable across at a given maximum depth between buoys and floats, or even parachutes, at which ships could call, hook on and send messages to the shore. Others proposed to apply gummed cotton to the cable, set it afloat and leave the gum to dissolve and "let the cable down quietly."

Pointed Paragraphs.

A brick manufacturer needs the earth in his business.

It's a poor patent medicine that can't get itself imitated.

Some families keep a servant girl and several of her relatives.

Some men's wealth is fabulous and that of others a mere fable.

After the first kiss a young man kicks himself for having wasted so much time.

Some women are afraid in the dark and others are more afraid of the light.

Don't get gay. It is easier to keep the lid on than it is to put it back on again.

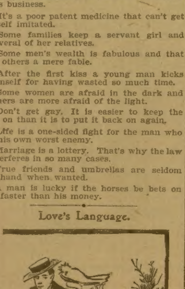
Life is a one-sided fight for the man who is his own worst enemy.

Marriage is a lottery. That's why the law interferes in so many cases.

True friends and umbrellas are seldom at hand when wanted.

A man is lucky if the horses be bets on go faster than his money.

Love's Language.



Kitty—Charlie, what gave you so much hope this morning? Why did you think I loved you?

Charlie—When you asked your heaviest chaperon to accompany us. See, she's five fences behind, my own!

Over the Phone.

Friend of the Family—I want to give your husband a birthday present. What do you think would please him most?

Mrs. Kutely—Oh, a stick pin. He says he never has enough of them.

Friend—What is his favorite stone?

Mrs. Kutely—The emerald. (Hanging up the 'phone.) Isn't that lovely! I've always wanted an emerald pin.

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I now offer this priceless secret to the women of America, knowing that it will always effect a cure, no matter how long you have suffered or how many doctors have failed.

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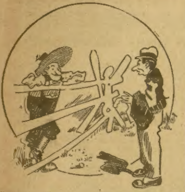


Stranger—How far is it to Bacon Ridge?

Farmer—Ten miles as the crow flies. Anything more I can do for you?

Stranger—Yes, you might loan me a pair of crow wings.

Plausible Theory.

Tom—I wonder why some kisses are so much sweeter than others?

Jack—Different brand of microbes.

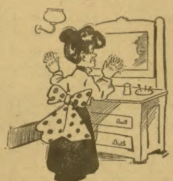
A Precedent.

Miggles—I say, old man, I'd like to have you put me up at your club.

Wiggles—I'd be only too glad, my boy, but—er—they are very particular who they admit.

Miggles—You don't say! How in the world did you manage to break in?

Dancing Term.



"Grand right and left."

Two of a Kind.

"It's simply impossible for me to find bread for my family," said the loafer.

"Same here," rejoined the hustler. "I have to work for it."

Postponing the Evil.

He—We shall have to economize, darling, after we are married.

She—Then why not stay engaged a few years longer?

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The patterns shown below are furnished us by one of the best, if not the best, pattern manufacturers in New York. They comprise the very latest styles, and are unequalled for accuracy in fit, simplicity in use, and are most economical of material. They sell from the stores from twenty-five to fifty cents each. Full instructions are printed on every pattern. Three months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 25 cents and any TWO of these patterns FREE. Six months' subscription to the CHICAGO LEDGER for 50 cents and FIVE of these patterns FREE. This offer is without equal. If you are wise you will take advantage of it at once.

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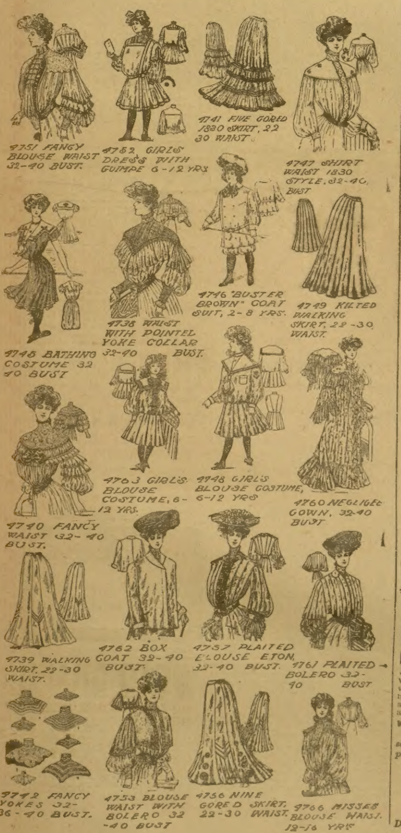
4751 FANCY BLOUSE WAIST 32-40 BUST.
4752 GIRLS DRESS WITH GUIMPE 6-12 YRS
4741 FIVE GORED 1830 SKIRT, 22 30 WAIST.
4747 SHIRT WAIST 1830 STYLE. 32-40, BUST
4746 "BUSTER BROWN" COAT SUIT, 2-8 YRS.
4749 KILTED WALKING SKIRT, 22-30 WAIST.
4738 WAIST WITH POINTEL YOKE COLLAR 32-40 BUST.
4745 BATHING COSTUME 32 40 BUST
4763 GIRLS BLOUSE COSTUME, 6-12 YRS.
4748 GIRLS BLOUSE COSTUME, 6-12 YRS
4760 NEGLIGEE GOWN, 32-40 BUST
4740 FANCY WAIST 32-40 BUST.
4739 WALKING SKIRT, 22-30 WAIST.
4762 BOX COAT 32-40 BUST
4757 PLAITED BLOUSE ETON, 32-40 BUST.
4761 PLAITED BOLERO 32-40 BUST
4742 FANCY YOKES 32-36-40 BUST.
4753 BLOUSE WAIST WITH BOLERO 32-40 BUST
4756 NINE GORED SKIRT. 22-30 WAIST.
4766 MISSES BLOUSE WAIST. 12-16 YRS

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DO YOU SUPPOSE we would make such an offer if we did not have the utmost confidence in the satisfying quality of our goods?

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Saves Dealers' Profits! Prevents Adulteration!

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We will send you FOUR FULL QUARTS of HAYNER'S SEVEN-YEAR-OLD RYE for $3.20, and we will pay the express charges. When you receive the whiskey, try it and if you don't find it all right and as good as you ever drank or can buy from any body else at any price, then send it back at our expense and your $3.20 will be returned to you by next mail. How could an offer be fairer? We take all the risk and stand all the expense, if the goods do not please you. Won't you let us send you a trial order? We ship in a plain sealed case; no marks to show what's inside.

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SEEING IS BELIEVING. Cut this out and send it to us with your name, post office and express office address and we will send the watch and chain complete to your express office for examination. You examine them at your express office and if as represented pay express agent our bargain sale price $3.75 and express charges and they are yours. Be sure to mention in your letter when ordering whether you want a **Ladies' Watch** or a **Gentleman's Watch**, we have it in both sizes, and order to-day as this advertisement will positively not appear again. Address:

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FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

DO YOU KNOW ME?

I am a curious creature,
  Although I never laugh;
No fish am I, nor animal,
  Though, maybe, half and half.

I have no fins, nor yet a tail,
  To help me when I swim,
But let a catfish come along—
  I'll try a race with him.

I'm neither bird not insect,
  But by a bit of luck
My feet are flat and webby
  As those of any duck.

No bear am I, nor squirrel,
  And yet, like both of these,
I lie in bed at winter,
  Contentedly at ease.

At twilight in the summer,
  I sing a little song,
That some consider musical,
  While others think it long.

Nature Study Corner.

"Come on, Tommy, let's go down to the swamp and catch some pollywogs," said Frank, one warm day as they were coming out of school.

"Oh, let us go, too!" pleaded Elizabeth and Marion, who were behind them.

"You can't go where we're going," said Tommy. "You'll get all wet. We're going after frogs."

"Come on, Elizabeth, let's get Miss Morrow and go by ourselves," said Marion, turning back toward the schoolhouse. Miss Morrow soon consented and off the trio started.

The road to the swamp led them along the brook, through open fields, sunny with buttercups and half-opened daisies. The sun was hot and they were glad to get under the shade of the trees. The swamp was a broad belt of woodland with a wide, sluggish pond in the center that had no definitely defined banks. Creeping in and out among brown grass hummocks and old tree roots, it caught many an unwary explorer ankle deep in its treacherous soil. But the rich, black, water-soaked earth made a very paradise for flowers. Forget-me-nots gleamed like stars; marsh marigolds flashed back the sun, while Jacks-in-the pulpit grew in such profusion that Miss Morrow declared they must have stumbled upon a Jack seminary.

"Why are some of them so much browner than others?" asked Elizabeth.

"If you look down at the bottom of the stalk you'll find a corresponding difference there," said Miss Morrow.

Elizabeth carefully parted the little pulpit down to the queer knobby bunch at the bottom. "Why, it's all yellow dust, like pollen!" she exclaimed, holding up her fingers.

"Yes, each little knob on that big bunch is a flower, but a very imperfect one—no calyx, no petals—nothing but stamens. Now, look down in the other greener one."

"Why, it's just the same, only there's no pollen—just little green knobs."

"Those will some day be the red berries that bear the seed," said Miss Morrow.

"Hasn't Jack a root to carry him over the winter?" questioned Elizabeth.

"Yes," interrupted Marion, "and it's the worst tasting stuff you can imagine. Tommy dared me to taste one last year. Ugh! my tongue burns yet."

"Ah, Jack is very wise in his way," said Miss Morrow. "That root is purposely disagreeable, so that animals won't attempt to destroy it."

"But isn't it sometimes eaten? I've heard it called Indian turnip."

"Yes, the Indians cooked it, and that removed the bitterness. It is said to be appetizing, but I've never tried it. Do you see what smooth green leaves the pulpit has?" Miss Morrow continued. "When an insect once begins to creep down inside he slides right to the bottom."

"I should think he'd have a hard time getting out again."

"Some of them do. Look, here's one that's a regular graveyard," and Miss Morrow held up a flower in which were the remains of several small insects. "If Mr. Bug had only been wise enough to push aside the pulpit curtains here at the bottom he would not have come to such an untimely end."

"Hello, girls! What you doing?" shouted a voice from the distance, and the boys came tramping through the woods toward them.

"Oh, we're seeing heaps of things, but we're not going to show you one!" said Elizabeth, saucily, pretending to be still offended.

"All right," laughed Frank, "then we sha'n't show you any of our pollywogs and fishes."

"Oh, oh, let me see!" cried both girls, resentment swallowed up in curiosity.

"I guess we shall have to compromise, girls, don't you think?" said Miss Morrow.

Brother Jonathan.

Did any of you little people ever know where this nickname of the people of the United States originated?

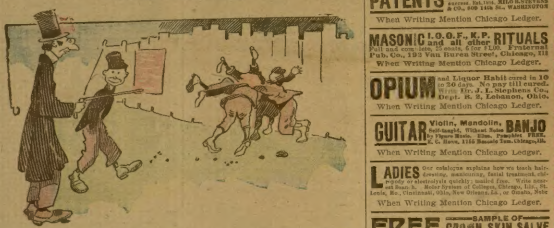
Well, one time during the Revolutionary War, when the army was in sore need of supplies and ammunition, at a council that was held, General Washington demanded funds, which were, however, unavailable. At length Washington said in despair, "Well, we must consult Brother Jonathan about it," referring to Gov. Jonathan Trumbull, of Connecticut. Now, it happened that the governor was so successful in raising the necessary money that after that, when there were any difficulties to be met, the soldiers used to say, "Go to Brother Jonathan." And after a while, when the origin of the phrase was lost, the expression still was popular and is in use at the present day.

Little Jimmy—Pa, can any one see through glass?

Pa—Certainly, my son.

Little Jimmy—Then what's the reason Uncle John can't see through his glass eye?

STELLAR ATTRACTION.



Old Gentleman—Why, those boys are fairly fighting to peep through the knot-hole in the fence. Must be a baseball game.

Micky Smith—Better'n dat, mister. Jimmy Juggins is gettin' spanked.

GOING TO THE PICNIC.

The basket was very heavy when our walk
  to the woods began,
And so I ate some cookies and gave some
  more to Nan.
And when we saw the frosted cake, we
  thought it wouldn't pay
To carry it farther; so we ate it on the
  way.
We felt so very thirsty and tired with our
  load
That we ate some juicy peaches as we
  rested by the road.
We ate some more things by and by, and
  now we rather dread
To reach the grove; for how can we have a
  picnic with only buttered bread?

About Chinese Names.

China and her people have been so much in the public eye lately that far more is known about them than was the case fifteen or twenty years ago. To even the school children of the present day that far away country is no longer the wholly unknown land that it used to be.

There is one thing about it, however, that is not so well understood as it should be, and that is the signification of Chinese names of places. A knowledge of their system would help young people in their study of geography.

Every name is in itself a description of the object to which the name belongs. For example, pei means north; nan, south; tung, east, and si, west, while tsin, kin or king means capital, or metropolis. Pekin, or Peking, therefore, means northern capital, and Nankin, southern capital.

Ho means river, and so does kiang; therefore Pei-ho is north river and Si-kiang, west river. Che means seven and Che-kiang is seven rivers. Shan means mountain; Shan-tung, therefore, is east mountain and Shan-si, west mountain. Pai-shan is white mountain, because pai is white.

Hai is the sea, and kwan is gate; Hai-kwan, therefore—the maritime customs—is gate of the sea, and Shan-hai-kwan, mountain and sea gate. Shang means city and Shang-hai, the city of the sea. As Hoang is yellow, Hoang-Ho is yellow river, and Hoang-Hai, yellow sea.

Kiao is a bridge, li, a Chinese mile, and pa, eight, so Pa-li-kiao is the eight mile bridge. Chow is a stopping place or depot; hence, Tung-chow is the eastern depot of Pekin.

With the aid of the words here given boys and girls might find some amusement in interpreting other names that they will see on their map.

THE CURIOUS BEAST.

The clothes horse is a curious beast;
Wet blankets trouble him the least
Of quadrupeds domesticated,
However much he is berated.
Just place him near a warmish stove
And he will never want to rove;
And yet he might be called a "ranger,"
With little use for stall or manger.

No need of bars or bolts or locks
To hold this equine paradox;
No need of bit or strap or halter,
Tho' rains will never make him falter.

* * * * * *

An easy load and he will stay
With you and yours till Judgment Day!

Good Reason.

Two little boys and two little girls were playing "house," the boys being the papas, of course. All went well until the papas insisted upon coming home to luncheon, although their wives repeatedly told them that they should stay down town in their offices and kill bears until 5 o'clock. The argument finally grew so noisy that auntie came to investigate.

"Boys, why do you come home when the little girls ask you not to? Is it because you are so fond of them you cannot keep away?"

"No," said Tom, disgustedly.

"Is it because you wanted another look at all your beautiful children?"

"No," said Rob, with even more disgust in his tones. "It's because the girls eat chocolate for lunch and we want some."

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